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THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

by Timothy Easton



“This privilege was denied him. For offering strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not, *there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them; and they died before the Lord.* With what emotions did he gather up their ashes or anticipate the day of final retribution. Unhappy father, doomed to witness thy two sons cut off from the land of the living, by the judgments of heaven!! What is the loss of children in infancy and falling by the stroke of nature, compared to this?”

See No. 71.

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THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

**POPULAR THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS
EXAMINED AND DISCUSSED.**

PART V.



“It is now about twelve months since, I was travelling with an eminent physician, and our conversation turned on the state of religion in the country; and on the evangelical and anti-evangelical ministers and laity of our own church; when he stated a fact which produced a deep impression on my mind, & he said it had produced a deep impression on his own.”

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POPULAR THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS, EXAMINED AND DISCUSSED

"When such a man takes him to the bed of sickness, and he knows it to be a sickness unto death—when, under all the weight of breathlessness and pain, he listens to the man of God, as he points the way that leadeth to eternity,—what, I would ask, is the kind of gospel that is most fitted to charm the sense of guilt and the anticipations of vengeance away from him? Sure we are, that we never in these affecting circumstances—through which you have all to pass—we never saw the man who could maintain a stability, and a hope, from the sense of his own righteousness; but who, if leaning on the righteousness of Christ, could mix a peace and an elevation with his severest agonies. We never saw the expiring mortal who could look with an undaunted eye on God as his law-giver; but often has all its languor been lighted up with joy at the name of Christ as his Saviour. We never saw the dying acquaintance who, upon the retrospect of his virtues and of his doings, could prop the tranquillity of his spirit on the expectation of a legal reward. Oh no! this is not the element which sustains the tranquillity of death-beds. It is the hope of forgiveness. It is a believing sense of the efficacy of the atonement. It is the prayer of faith offered up in the name of him who is the Captain of our salvation. It is a dependance on that power which can alone impart a meetness for the inheritance of the saints, and present the spirit holy, and unreprouceable, and unblameable in the sight of God." *Dr. Chalmers.*

Mr. John Roscoe, whose views of truth were decidedly anti-evangelical, met with a more formidable antagonist in his brother than he expected; and though he had been foiled in some previous encounters, yet he again resumed the debate, with a high degree of confidence. He said, that he would wave for the present any reference to the nature of conversion; or the agent by whom it was effected; though he wished it to be understood, that he was not altogether satisfied with the discussion of the preceding evening; and he then bore an unequivocal testimony against the doctrine of an unconditional salvation, as being not only contrary to the Scripture, but subversive of the morals of society.

Mr. John Roscoe. "I cannot, Sir, imagine that you can object to the strictures which the Rev. Mr. C— made in his sermon, last Sunday, on the censurable conduct of those clergymen, who declaim against good works, and exalt a dogmatic belief in certain crude opinions, as the only necessary condition on which sinners can obtain the forgiveness of Almighty God."

Mr. Roscoe. "As I have not been in the habit of hearing the evangelical clergy preach, I certainly cannot say from my own personal knowledge, how far the charge which is alleged against them, is just or unfounded. If they do declaim against good works, they are guilty of an awful dereliction of duty, and should not receive the sanction of any wise or good man. I agree with you, that this is not the age in which virtue in any of her forms, or requirements, should be reproached, especially by those who are professedly her ministers. For if they, who ought to defend the passes to evil, turn their weapons of war against the bulwarks of practical righteousness; the common enemy will meet with an ally, where he ought to meet with a foe; and the capital and its dependencies will soon be taken. But though I have not heard any of them preach, I have for a long time been in the habit of reading their published discourses, and I give it as my unqualified opinion, that from the press, they push the claims of practical righteousness, on our attention to such an extreme point, that I have often heard them censured for their excessive strictness; and it is fair to presume that they are not less urgent, when they are in the pulpit. But, if I admit, for the sake of the argument, that they do declaim against good works, we know that they practice them: and their hearers, with some few exceptions, will sustain no loss, by a comparison with the most virtuous members of society."*

* The author resides in a town where the gospel of Jesus Christ is preached within the pale of the establishment in its simplicity, and purity; and it is his happiness and his honour to live on terms of intimacy with many who have received it, as the engrafted word of endless life; and he can appeal with confidence to their Christian deportment, in confirmation of the correctness of his statement. If we were to say, that they excel all others, in every thing that is lovely, and of good

Mr. John Roscoe. "Then you will admit, that some of their hearers are not men of virtue? I thank you for this admission, it is rather more than I expected; it proves all I want, as it demonstrates with a force of evidence, which I presume no one can withstand, that their ministers preach a doctrine, which necessarily leads to licentiousness of conduct."

Mr. Roscoe. "I am rather astonished, that you should take my concession, as a gratuitous offering which you did not expect to receive. Indeed, I am no advocate for a party, but merely for the truth; and such are its attractions in my estimation, that I prize it more than silver or gold. This argument which you employ against the moral tendency of evangelical preaching, is liable to two very formidable objections; it is fallacious,—and it proves too much. It supposes in the first place, that the conduct of a *minority* is the test by which the orthodoxy of the preacher is to be decided. But why fix on the *minority* as the test? when their relative number is a tacit proof, that they are the exceptions to the general deportment of his hearers. If a few in a local district are turbulent and factious, and disposed to raise the standard of rebellion; while the larger proportion of the people are peaceable and submissive, revering the authority of the laws, and cultivating the virtues of social life; would you recommend the suspension of the Habeas Corpus, as though the entire mass were in a state of revolt? Where would be the equity, or the expediency of such a measure? Why impugn the character of all, because a few are criminal, and involve the innocent and the guilty, in one indiscriminate visitation of punishment? And would not such an argument apply with equal, if not with stronger force to the anti-evangelical clergy? Have they no immoral hearers? Have they none who set at open defiance the laws of God and man? Have they no scoffers, who visit their temples? No infidels who commune at their altars? Can they look round on

report, he might be considered as guilty of the crime of flattery, which he abhors; but he may say without fear of impeachment, that they are the ornaments of the church, to which they are attached, and justly regarded as some of the most useful members of civil society.

their congregations, and say, "ye are manifestly de-
clared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us,
written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living
God. 2 Cor. iii. 3.

Mr. John Roscoe. "But you know we enforce virtue,
and tell our hearers, that their final salvation depends
on their becoming virtuous. This you will admit, is a
powerful motive, more powerful than that which an
evangelical preacher employs, who says that we may
be saved without it."

Mr. Roscoe. "No, he does not say, that we can
be saved without becoming virtuous. This is an ac-
cusation which cannot be substantiated; and to bring
it forward, is to bear false witness against another. He
does not require virtue on our part, as a pre-requisite
to recommend us to the favour of God; but he enforces
it, as expressive of our reverence for his authority, and
of our gratitude to his sovereign goodness, in redeeming
us from the curse of a violated law. He does not
substitute our very defective righteousness, for the
righteousness of Jesus Christ, which would be an entire
abandonment of the most essential doctrine of the gospel:
but he tells us that *the grace of God that bringeth sal-
vation teaches us that, denying ungodliness and worldly
lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in
this present world,* Titus ii. 12. Indeed the evangelical
minister requires a higher degree of virtue than his
opponent; and he employs more powerful motives to
enforce it. He requires the entire renovation of the mind,
and such a conversion from all the evil habits, and
impure propensities of our nature, as shall constitute
us *new creatures in Christ Jesus.* Do you enforce
virtue from an appeal to the authority of God? so does
your evangelical brother; do you enforce it by a re-
ference to its own loveliness, and its tendency to promote
personal and relative happiness? so does he; but he
goes a step farther; he presses into the service of the
pulpit, the motives which arise from the redemption of
the soul, by the death of the Lord of life; and if we
look around us, we shall perceive that these have a more
powerful effect on the principles and conduct of men,
than any other which ever have been, or ever can be
employed. Men who will resist authority, may be

subdued by clemency, and those whom a dread of punishment could not reclaim from evil, have been turned from the errors of their way, *after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward them hath appeared.*"

Mr. John Roscoe. "I grant, that the people who sit under an evangelical ministry, talk more about religion, than those who do not, and adopt habits which are certainly more conformable to religion; but I do not think that they are any better, (if so good,) than their less ostentatious neighbours; nor can I avoid believing that many of them are *insincere*; and *put on their cloak of profession, more as a badge of distinction, amongst men, than as an ornament in the sight of God.*"

Mr. Roscoe. You certainly are right in your admission that those who sit under an evangelical ministry are more religious in their habits, and in their conversation, than those who do not; but how far your impeachment of their motives accords with the principle of justice, and of humility, remains to be ascertained. Yes, they do talk more about religion, and they understand more about it. I remember a poor woman of the name of Allen,* who once lived in the cottage which you so much admired this morning, who often used to perplex and confound me, when we conversed together on religious topics. I could not account for her superior knowledge, as she was very deficient in education, and the triumphant manner of her death, left an impression on my mind that there was a something in religion, which I had never attained, nor discovered; nor is this a solitary instance."

"Oh no!" said *Mrs. John Roscoe*, (making an apology for her interruption,) "I am fully convinced that those who embrace evangelical sentiments are more religious in their conversation and habits than those who neglect them. But it is at the awful hour of death, when body and soul are on the eve of separation, that the difference between the two descriptions of persons becomes the more apparent and impressive. We had a servant, a member of the Dissenting chapel, who

* See Nos. 6 and 16 of this Series.

lived with us some few months, when she was taken ill, and left us. She resided with her father, a poor pious man, several months, when she died. I often went to see her, and was standing by her side when she breathed her last. She was composed, and even cheerful, in prospect of her departure; but it was the cheerfulness of a spirit made happy by the consolations of religion, and which expected to be still happier in the celestial world." *

Mr. Roscoe. "It is now about twelve months since, I was travelling with an eminent physician; and our conversation turned on the state of religion in the country; and on the evangelical and anti-evangelical ministers and laity of our own church; when he stated a fact which produced a deep impression on my mind, as he said it produced a deep impression on his own. 'In the course of my profession,' he observed, 'I am often called to witness the termination of human life; the retiring of the actors from the busy stage; the departure of intelligent beings from one world to another; and I have uniformly found, that those who have imbibed the evangelical sentiments die much more like the Christians of the Bible than those who have not. In-

* The Author once knew a lady, who was celebrated in the town in which she lived, no less for her benevolence, than she was for her utter dislike to those persons who had embraced evangelical sentiments. She generally used to term them, by way of reproach, Methodists, Enthusiasts, or Fanatics. For many years she was in the habit of visiting the poor and the infirm, sympathizing with them when in trouble, giving them money to purchase the necessaries and comforts of life, and originated several institutions of a public nature, which still remain as the memorial of her practical goodness. Often has she sat beside the lingering sufferer, wiping away the cold sweats of death, and administering with her own hands, the last portion of food, or of medicine, which nature has consented to receive. This lady, when conversing with a friend whose prejudices against the Fanatics of the day, (as the disciples of the Redeemer are styled,) ran as high as her own, said, "*I don't know how to account for it, but I find these people know more about religion than we do; and appear more happy in their dying moments, than any other I have ever met with.*" Happy would it have been for her, if some friend had been present to have explained the cause of it—but no—living under the sombrous gloom of a pharisaical faith, which admits not of the clear light of the truth, she lived in ignorance of the nature of faith in Christ, and in ignorance she died.

deed I give it, as the result of long experience, that evangelical religion, though much despised, is the most conducive to the happiness of man, especially in his last moments.’”

Mr. John Roscoe. “Yes! the imagination, when acted upon by evangelical opinions, very often holds a pretended intercourse with Heaven, and sees sights, and hears sounds which are super-human; but are we so far gone from the sober restraints of reason as to become the advocates of its enthusiastic raptures?”

Mr. Roscoe. “I am not surprised at your remarks, as I once made a similar one,* though I felt a little misgiving of heart as I gave it utterance; but now, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the delusion has vanished away, and I am convinced that what I once called, and what you still call, the raptures of a disordered imagination, are the triumphs of faith over the terrors of death—the scintillations of animated hope of a blissful immortality; and the sublime expressions which have fallen from the lips of the dying saint, who always dies as an unworthy sinner, are as much in accordance with the genius of the Gospel as they are reprobated by the spirit of scepticism.”

Mr. John Roscoe. “I have no doubt but they will be saved, if they are sincere.”

Mr. Roscoe. “And why should you doubt their sincerity? If you see a man devoting his mind to the pursuits of commerce, or of literature, or of pleasure, you do not feel yourself at liberty to impugn his motives; then why should you do it, if you see him devoting his mind to religion? Is religion the only subject which we are forbidden to approach? or if we dare approach it with reverence for its authority, with ardent gratitude for its sacred communications, with deep and strong interest in its sublime enunciations of an ulterior state of existence, when we shall rise up to the full strength, and purity, and grandeur of our being,—are we to be reproached and maligned for insincerity and hypocrisy? You accuse us of ostentation, because we make a more decided profession of religion than some

* See No. 14 of this Series, page 11.

of our neighbours; but allow me to ask you, if the spirit in which this charge originates has not exuded its venom against pure and undefiled religion, when it has been embodied in a living character, in every age of the Christian church?"

Mr. John Roscoe. "Why you know that some who have made the greatest professions have been guilty of the most dishonourable conduct!"

Mr. Roscoe. "Yes, I know it; and I must confess that the inconsistent conduct of professors induced me, for many years, to cherish very unfavourable opinions against all who embraced evangelical sentiments; but I am now satisfied that I acted neither wisely nor equitably. Because one member of a family, or ten members of a religious community act inconsistently with their professions to each other, am I at liberty to condemn the whole?"

Mr. John Roscoe. "But you will admit that it is calculated to excite suspicion."

Mr. Roscoe. "It may excite suspicion where an evil passion or an enslaving prejudice has gained an ascendancy, but not otherwise; as I do maintain, that the law of equity forbids us suspecting the sincerity and uprightness of any man until he gives us a cause. Am I to suspect the honour, the integrity, and the friendship of Mr. Stevens, because some one who goes to the same church, and professes to have imbibed the same theological opinions, has been guilty of an act of fraud, or sacrificed his honour by attempting to wound the reputation of his friend?"

Mr. John Roscoe. "But when people make a more splendid profession than their neighbours, it is natural for us to expect a more exemplary conduct."

Mr. Roscoe. "Certainly; and if they are not exemplary in their conduct you may impeach their sincerity; but you ought to confine the act of impeachment to the offender, and not extend it to others. Will any grand jury in this kingdom find a true bill against a loyal subject because he lives in the vicinity of a traitor? No. If a professor of religion run to the same excess of riot with others; if he press to your theatres; if he visit your card-parties; if he figure at your concerts or your balls,—you may very justly reproach him; but if

he do not, such is the fastidious and anti-christian spirit of the age, you think it strange, and begin to speak evil of him. If he act in direct opposition to his religious principles you charge him with hypocrisy; if he act in conformity with them he is subjected to the same imputation, with this essential difference in his favour,—the first accusation would be just, but the latter unfounded.”

“I think,” said *Mrs. John Roscoe*, “that we ought not to censure a whole body on account of the imperfections of a few individual members. It would not be just. Ought every Englishman to be considered as disaffected to the government? because some have been executed for high treason: or an enemy to liberty? because some have exerted all their most powerful energies to oppose its triumphant march. Certainly not. Then why should every professor of religion be reproached as an hypocrite, because some have deserved it?”

“Very true, Aunt,” said *Miss Roscoe*, “but such is the custom of this strange world; and though we protest against it, yet we can obtain no redress. When one, who has been gay, becomes religious, the magicians prophecy that he will go off into a state of derangement;—if he retain his reason, as is usually the case, they express a *devout* wish that the motives of his conduct may prove to be sincere;—if he act in accordance with his religious principles, and refuse to conform to their customs and habits, he is stigmatized as unsocial, precise, and hypocritical;—and such is the degree of virulence with which the spirit of enmity goes forth against him, that if no imperfections can be discovered in his character some will be imputed.”

Mr. John Roscoe. “Courtesy requires that I yield the point to the ladies, who, to their honour, generally take the part of the accused; but (addressing his brother,) I still believe that the offer of an unconditional salvation to men of every description of character is hazardous to the interests of public and private virtue.”

Mr. Roscoe. “But the evangelical clergy do not, if I judge from their written discourses, make that unconditional offer which you suppose. They require repentance towards God, before they inculcate faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They require that we should

forsoke our sins, before they encourage us to hope for mercy. And then the faith which they inculcate, is not a mere philosophical assent to the truth of Christianity, which may leave the passions in a dormant state, and all the propensities of the mind going after the objects of their gratifications: but such a faith as shall, by its own reaction, purify the imagination, overcome the allurements and fascinations of the world, and work within us that moral conformity of the mind to the purity of the Divine nature, which forms the great line of distinction between a real and a nominal Christian; between one who is born of the flesh, and one who is born of the Spirit;—between the natural man, who estimates the things of the Spirit of God as foolishness, and the spiritual man, who discerns them in all their moral simplicity, beauty, and grandeur. You talk of a conditional salvation; but if you intend by that phrase, that we are required to perform any actions by which we are to merit the favour of God, and a seat in his celestial kingdom, you hold a sentiment, not more opposed to the Scriptures than it is destructive to human happiness; for who can tell when he has acquired that exact degree of virtue which will justify his claim? Indeed, my brother, we ought always to remember that we are sinners—that in the most improved state of our character we are yet imperfect—that after all the acts of obedience which we may perform we are unprofitable servants—and that if ever we are saved, as I hope we shall be, it will not be *for our own works, or deservings*, as the articles of our church declare, but by grace, Eph. ii. 8. Considering the indifference which is so generally manifested by persons of all ranks, and of every character, to the momentous truth on which the final and eternal destiny of the soul depends, and the rapid progress which the worst of principles is making amongst the morals of social life; considering the amazing rapidity with which the fashion of this world is passing away, and how soon we shall be called to appear before the judgment seat of Christ; instead of repressing any ardent passion for religion, when we see it glowing in a human bosom, we ought to cherish it; and should contemplate the secession of one sinner, who withdraws from the deluded and infatuated multitude

to repent, and to pray, with an order of feeling of a similar nature, with the spirits of the invisible world, of whom our Lord says, (Luke xv. 7,) *that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.* To ridicule such a person, would be enough to make an angel wrap up his face in his mantle to conceal his anguish; but to persecute him, is a species of crime which may be less offensive to the semi-christianity of modern times, than the sin of schism; but when the light of eternity unveils the turpitude of evil, in all its aggravations of guilt, it will be marked by a peculiarity of punishment emphatically its own."

Mr. John Roscoe. "I must confess, that I am somewhat surprized by your last observation, for who will dare in this country to persecute another on account of his religious opinions. If you think that I would carry my opposition to evangelical sentiments, to such a point, you mistake me. I think that all opinions are open for free investigation and discussion; but every person ought to be protected in the profession of them, from every species of injury, or of insult."

Mr. Roscoe. "I doubt not, but you would refuse to join with others in any act of open and direct persecution; but is not misrepresentation, and innuendo, and invective, and impeachment of motive, a species of persecution, as offensive to a pure and noble mind, as the confiscation of property, or even temporary loss of liberty? It is possible that a few of the expressions which have escaped your lips in this conversation, have been elicited by the heat of debate; but the same apology cannot be made for some, who coolly, and deliberately bring forward charges, and insinuations, which they know to be false: and often employ their influence to injure the reputation, and if possible to destroy the happiness of those who embrace religious opinions in opposition to their own. The meanness of this spirit is as censurable, as its tendency is pernicious; and though I would avoid giving utterance to any improper language; yet I candidly confess, that I feel no less astonished, than disgusted, when I see it cherished in the bosom of any man."

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

THE EVANGELICAL CLERGY.



"You may give a prominence to the divine precepts, in your sermons, equally conspicuous to the tables of the ten commandments, which are suspended near the communion; and enforce them, if possible, with an energy, not less solemn, and impressive, than Sinai witnessed, when she trembled as the voice of the Lord waxed louder and louder; but if you place the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ in the shades, and neglect to dwell with devout, and fervid animation, on his love for sinners, you will never see any signs of that spiritual animation, which is felt and enjoyed, when the times of refreshing come from his presence."

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THE EVANGELICAL CLERGY:

"We mistake the matter, if we think that the offence of the cross has yet ceased from the land. We mistake it, if we think that the persecution of contempt, a species of persecution more appalling to some minds than even direct and personal violence, is not still the appointed trial of all who would live godly, and of all who would expound zealously and honestly the doctrines of Christ Jesus our Lord. We utterly mistake it, if we think that Christianity is not even to this very hour the same very peculiar thing that it was in the days of the apostles—that it does not as much signalize and separate us from a world lying in wickedness—that the reproach cast upon Paul, that he was mad, because he was an intrepid follower of Christ, is not still ready to be preferred against every faithful teacher, and every consistent disciple of the faith, and that under the terms of methodism, and fanaticism, and mysticism, there is not ready to be discharged upon them from the thousand batteries of a hostile and unbelieving world, as abundant a shower of invective and contumely as in the first ages." DR. CHALMERS.

"You will admit" said *Mr. John Roscoe*, on resuming the conversation with his brother, "that humility is one of the cardinal virtues of Christianity; and that this grace ought to shine with a pre-eminent lustre in the character of her ministers. They ought, of all men, to be the least assuming, to be the least censorious, and should rather let their conduct proclaim their possession of the religious principle, than their lips. But do the evangelical clergy cultivate this virtue? Do they not, as the Rev. Mr. C—— remarked in his Sermon, make bolder and higher pretensions to religion than others? Do they not arrogate to themselves the exclusive honour and fidelity of preaching the gospel in its simplicity, and its purity? Do they not condemn as heretical an opposite style of preaching to their own? and are they not confederating together as a distinct order in our church, looking with a haughty disdain on their opponents, with whom they hold no intercourse?"

Mr. Roscoe. "I agree with you that humility is a cardinal virtue of Christianity; but the humility of Christianity is not a virtue which requires, or tolerates

rates, the compromise of the truth.—St. Paul, is a fine example; and yet when Peter began to dissemble at Antioch, (Gal. ii. 11.) he *withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed*. And what does he say, when writing to the churches of Galatia, respecting those teachers who were corrupting them by erroneous doctrines? Gal. i. 6, 7, 8.

“The evangelical clergy profess to be religious men; and they give the world a proof of the sincerity of their profession, by renouncing its pleasures, and by conforming themselves to the sacred obligations of their profession. Are they to be censured for this? If they appear more like religious men, than some of their anti-evangelical brethren; will you make their consistency an occasion of offence?”

“You say they arrogate to themselves the exclusive honour of preaching the gospel; and if they believe what they preach, not to warn their hearers against the reception of opposite sentiments, would be on their part, a direlection of duty. *They* believe, that we are saved by grace, through faith; but *you* believe, that a man's virtues conciliate the favour of God, and fit him for the kingdom of heaven. *They* believe that no man is born again, till a moral change is effected in his mind by the renewing of the Holy Ghost; *you* believe that every man is born again when he is baptized by water. *They* believe that a nominal Christian, needs to be converted, as much as a heathen; *you* believe such an event to be impossible; *they* believe that a disciple of Jesus Christ, will appear in the world as a stranger and a pilgrim; deriving his most elevated enjoyments from communion with his invisible Lord; walking by faith in hope of a blissful immortality, which will more than recompense him for all his present conflicts, and sacrifices, and deprivations; but *you* believe that he may conform himself to the habits and customs of the society in which he lives; lead off the dance of gaiety, encore the song of mirth, visit the theatre of dissipation, and yet retain the identity of his character. Why, the antipodes are not more remote from each other, than the men who imbibe these opposite opinions; and if the evangelical clergy are right, you must be wrong; and to

avow this, is an act of honesty rather than arrogance. You say that they are confederating together as a distinct order in the church, and look with disdain on their opponents, with whom they hold no intercourse: But for what purpose do they confederate together? Is it not to establish, and support, the different religious institutions which shine as the brightest gems in the diadem of our national honour? Are they not the patrons, and the advocates of our Bible Societies—our Missionary Societies—our Jewish and Tract Societies? and why do you not associate with them? Have they issued any law of exclusion? Have they dug a gulph, broad and deep, like that which separates the good and evil spirits of the invisible world, so that all intercourse between them and you is inevitably cut off?—No. They have invited you again and again to join them, but you have refused: they have sent the flag of truce, but you will not permit it to enter your camp: they have offered to share with you the honour of ameliorating the moral condition of mankind, but you have declined the proposal; and now to charge them with disdain in refusing to associate with you, is one of those wanton movements of caprice, which I think on reflection you will not feel disposed to repeat."

Mr. John Roscoe. "Perhaps they would allow us to associate with them, but that you know we cannot do, as we think they are materially injuring the peace of society. What divisions have these public institutions which you have so poetically described as the brightest gems in our national diadem, introduced into our church? Some are their warm advocates; others their powerful opponents; the press teems with the pamphlets of angry debate; while the infidel looks on with unhallowed pleasure, at the war of words, and elements of passion and rage. Is not this calculated to sink the dignity of our order?"

Mr. Roscoe. "Why, I must confess, that an infidel will be strengthened in his infidelity, when he sees the ministers of religion, attempting to impede the circulation of the bible, which they profess to regard as of divine origin: and if they refuse to co-operate with others in the universal dissemination of the truth

which it contains, will he not be induced to believe that they do not regard it as essential to the final happiness of man? It is the opposition which is raised against such institutions that does the injury; and in my opinion, those who raise, and support this opposition, are incurring an awful degree of responsibility, which will render their appearance before their Lord and Master, a scene of heart-rending terror.

Mr. John Roscoe. "But do not these evangelical clergy, sow the seeds of division in every parish in which they preach? Did the Rev. Mr. C—— exaggerate when he said, that as soon as they open their lips and give utterance to their sentiments, there is an instantaneous commotion among the people. Those who lived in peace are split into parties; and the village, or the city, which held the unity of the faith, suddenly becomes the arena of religious debate. Indeed, we have known private families whose happiness has been destroyed by this style of preaching; and it is now unhappily too notorious, that the conversion of a single member of a family to *evangelical* principles, is the signal for the departure of domestic peace."

"Yes," said *Mrs. Roscoe*, "that is a fact which I can attest from bitter experience. There was no family in this village which enjoyed more domestic felicity than ours, till Sophia embraced her evangelical opinions; and since that fatal hour to the present, we have been a divided family."

Mr. Roscoe. "Yes, my dear, we lived in peace,—but we lived without religion."

Mrs. Roscoe. "Why we constantly went to church."

Mr. Roscoe. "Yes, but were we a religious family? Did we not often spend the Sabbath in paying, or receiving visits; in reading newspapers, and other publications of a similar nature? Was there any family prayer in our house; or did we ever speak, or think on religious subjects, as those who felt any deep interest in them? When our dear Sophia felt the transforming influence of the truth, producing a taste, and a peculiarity of character in strict accordance with the Scriptures, I was no less offended and alarmed than yourself; and resolutely opposed her, till her spirits were nearly broken; but I have

been convinced of my error, and can attest from experience, that we may observe the forms of religion, while destitute of the *power of it*; and even indulge the hope of final happiness, while we live in a state of alienation from God, through the ignorance that is in us."

"You, my brother," addressing himself to *Mr. John Roscoe*, "object to evangelical preaching, on account of the commotions which it excites amongst the people. If this objection be valid, it applies with equal force against the preaching of the apostles, who in every place where their labours were successful, formed a society, whose members were always ridiculed, and often persecuted, for their moral and religious peculiarities. And is it not the avowed design of Christianity, when it operates on the human character, to form a peculiar people, who are to become zealous for good works? And is it not this peculiarity in the character of a religious man, that provokes the enmity and opposition of the world? Does not Jesus Christ say, (Matt. x. 35, 36.) *I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law: and a man's foes shall be they of his own household?* Here is a village, or a town, or a parish, in which the people are taught to believe that they were born Christians, regenerated when they were baptized; admitted members of the church; and who will, after they are dead, be consigned to the tomb by the officiating minister, in full and certain hope of a joyful resurrection to eternal life. They all believe this; they live in peace; there is no debating on the subject of religion. There is a most profound stillness pervading the whole community. They never talk about repentance; faith in Christ; becoming new creatures in Christ Jesus; glorifying God in their body and their spirit; being made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; rejoicing in hope of the glory of God; or dying in the Lord. There is as great a dearth amongst them of these scriptural phrases, and of the sublime princi-

ples which they embody, as you will find in those parts of the moral world, on which the light of revelation never dawned, or the grace of heaven never descended. And how do they live? Do they live in the fear and love of God? Do they adopt the habits of domestic religion? Do they cultivate the private virtues of enlightened, and renewed men? There is peace, I grant, but it resembles the awful stillness of Ezekiel's valley, which was covered with the dry bones of the slain, rather than the moral animation, and strength, and unity, which prevailed after the visitations of the divine Spirit, under whose life giving breath, they arose an exceeding great army. When the prophet began to prophesy, there was immediately consequent upon it, a noise, and behold, *a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.* (Ezek. xxxvii. 7.) And something analogous to this, takes place amongst a people, when an evangelical minister begins to preach.—The thoughtless are roused to reflection; the dissipated are reformed; the sabbath breakers, the drunkards, the swearers, are reclaimed; the devotees of superstition become spiritual and holy, the momentous questions of religion, occupy and engross their attention,—undergo public and private discussion; and the moral aspect of the community is changed. But as the general transformation is effected, by the gradual conversion of individuals, the multitude, yet unenlightened, and unrenewed, raise a loud clamour, as though their happiness and honour were sacrificed for ever."

"That such a moral renovation often results from evangelical preaching, is a fact too notorious to be denied; but has it ever resulted from anti-evangelical preaching? You may give a prominence to the divine precepts, in your sermons, equally conspicuous to the tables of the ten commandments, which are suspended near the communion; and enforce them, if possible, with an energy, not less solemn and impressive, than Sinai witnessed when she trembled as the voice of the Lord waxed louder and louder; but if you place the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ in the shades, and neglect to dwell with devout, and fervid animation, on his love for sinners, you will never see any

signs of that spiritual animation, which is felt and enjoyed, when the times of refreshing come from his presence."

Mr. John Roscoe. "We very well know that evangelical preaching has a more powerful effect than anti-evangelical; and that those who admire it, are, generally speaking, more loquacious on the subject of religion, and more religiously disposed in their habits; but this is one of the objections which we urge against it. If *we* feel too little, they feel *too much*; and if *we* are not quite so religious in our habits as *we* ought to be, *they* go to the opposite extreme, and become enthusiasts. *We* keep within the boundary which reason marks out, but *they* cross it; and while *we* restrain our passions, and rarely discuss the awful subjects of religion in our social interviews, *they* yield to impulses and excitements, which they rashly ascribe to a mental intercourse with an invisible world; and often use terms of expression which are more nearly allied to rhapsody, than sober truth."

Mr. Roscoe. "But why should an enthusiastic ardour in religion, be marked with such strong reprobation; when it is admired in almost every other pursuit. You applaud it in a general, who hazards his own life, and the life of his army, to drive the foe from the heights of victory.—You applaud it in a pleader, or a senator, who throws the whole energy of his mind into his subject; returning after a momentary pause, or partial defeat, to the combat; kindling into rapture as the inspiration of his genius comes fresh upon him, or bursting forth in torrents of indignation, as he approaches the object of his abhorrence; keeping a whole audience hanging with quivering anxiety on his lips, as he moves forward to snatch the victim from the altar; or rouse up the slumbering honour of a nation to secure her rights, or avenge her wrongs. And if a minister of mercy, who is appointed to watch for souls,"

8

That must for ever live
In raptures or in woe,

display the same degree of vigilance, breathe the same

degree of impassioned ardour in his addresses, rise through all the graduated scale of feeling, from the tenderest pity, to the loftiest tone of solemn awe, will you condemn *in him*, what you applaud *in others*? Is he who is entrusted with the most responsible commission, that was ever given to mortal man, and on whose fidelity the endless happiness or misery of his hearers, is made in some measure to depend, to be the only man, who must appear uninterested in the result of his labours, to gain public applause?"

"The censures which you have passed on the excitement of the passions, amongst the admirers of evangelical preaching, I consider no less opposed to the physical laws of our nature, than to the avowed tendency of scriptural truth. Can a man of a refined taste, whose passions are strong, and easily susceptible of excitement, avoid being deeply interested by the sublime, or beautiful, in the natural; or the pathetic, or tragical, in the history of the moral world?—No. Impossible. He is affected, before he is conscious of feeling; and often, when he is incapable of assigning the specific cause of it. To argue that this liability to strong excitement, is a proof of the imperfection of our nature, is nothing less than a begging of the question; a species of artifice which cannot be tolerated. Our nature is liable to excitement; we cannot avoid it. It is upon the whole considered a favourable symptom of a fine taste, or a good disposition. We prefer it to stoicism; to apathy; to a mental dulness, which neither sounds harmonious, nor scenes enchanting, can move. Now by what law is it rendered criminal for a man to be deeply affected by the momentous truths of revelation. Does the law of our nature forbid it?—No. You yourself have confessed that the admirers of evangelical preaching are in general strongly, too strongly, affected by what they believe. To strip your charges of the measured language in which they are brought, you say, that they are too deeply affected by the awful descriptions which the sacred writers have given us of the miseries of the lost soul; *too strongly animated by the sublime enunciations which they have made of life and immortality; too*

grateful to the Lord of glory, for bearing their sins in his own body, on the tree ; too intense in their desires after a more perfect conformity to the purity of the divine nature."

"Will the law of the Scriptures sanction the application of such charges? Do we not read of the peace of God which passeth all understanding? Does not the apostle Peter say, when alluding to Jesus Christ, (1 Pet. i. 8.) *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory?* Does not Paul employ language equally strong, when he says, (Rom. xv. 13.) *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost?* Is not the same elevated strain of high enraptured feeling, apparent in the following paragraph, of the first epistle of St. John. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us; that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure:* chap. iii. 1—3.

Mr. John Roscoe. "I grant that such language might be used with propriety, by the holy apostles; but, I presume, you will not venture to institute a comparison between them and us?"

Mr. Roscoe. "They were, unquestionably, superior to all other men, in the qualifications which they possessed for their apostolic office; and attained to higher degrees of personal religion, than any of their successors; but, as they were sinners, in common with the rest of mankind, and were saved in the same way as the most guilty and impure, they were not endowed with any spiritual attainments which were exclusively confined to their order. And of this you must be conscious, if you examine the passages which I have quoted; for they do not speak of their own exclusive attainments, but of those high privileges which belonged to all, who had embraced the truths which

they preached. And as these truths are handed down to us, for the same moral purposes, as they were originally proclaimed to the inhabitants of Judea, of Greece, and of Rome: it is obvious, that if they do not awaken within our breasts, an ardour of feeling, equally fervid, and intense, and devotional, it is because we have not given to them that cordial reception, which they demand. But if they do awaken a similar ardour of feeling; if they do allow us to utter a similar phraseology of expression, as the only descriptive vehicle of our moral sensations, and anticipations; if they do gain that high ascendancy over our senses, and taste, and judgment, which they maintained over theirs; to reproach us as enthusiasts, is nothing less than a covert attack on the sanctity of our faith."

Mr. John Roscoe. "But will you go so far as to maintain, that a person has not received the truth, who has not felt this peace, which passeth all understanding; this joy which is unspeakable, and full of glory; and who is not animated with a full and certain hope of future felicity?"

Mr. Roscoe. "No. There are intermediate stages between the first impressions of truth on the heart, and the attainment of these high privileges of the Christian. The peace, which ariseth from a dependence on the efficacy of the atonement, may be only as the serenity of the mind, which feels no guilt pressing on its sensibilities; and the hope, which fingers over the felicities of a future world, may be as the feeble rays of light, breaking in upon the spirit, amidst the gloom of uncertainty; but still, in this early stage of the application of the truth to the mind, you will discover a similarity of impression, to that more powerful, and rapturous excitement, which marks its progressive, and more perfect operations."

Mr. John Roscoe. "There are some leading truths in the scheme of revelation, on which we agree; but I candidly confess, that they have not produced the same effect on my mind, which they appear to have produced on yours. I have been, and still am, *satisfied by the simple belief of them; but you speak, as though they had produced some extraordinary*

moral effect on your mind. I am not disposed to impeach the validity of your testimony. I will admit it. And I will admit that this moral effect is novel, is permanent, and a source of high satisfaction; but may it not rather be resolved into the singular construction of your mind, than considered as an indispensable evidence of an actual reception of the truth?"

Mr. Roscoe. "But how can it be resolved into the singular construction of my mind, when it is but recently that this effect has been produced? and when it is an effect which others feel who embrace het. evangelical principles. I often listened with a mixture of astonishment and displeasure, to my dear Sophia, when she was endeavouring to convince me, that all personal religion, had its origin in the supernatural illumination, and renovation of the mind; and though she would sometimes overpower my arguments, by her apt quotations from the Scriptures: yet my reason, and my prejudices, revolted against the doctrine, because I could not perceive its necessity, nor comprehend how it could take place.* But now I trust, I have felt that moral change, which I once despised; and which too many still despise. The Scriptures, which I have studied for years, disclose new beauties; the scheme of redemption, consummated by the death of the Lord Jesus, is my most sacred theme of meditation; and if I have any regret, it is not because I have imbibed evangelical truth, at my advanced age, but because I did not receive it at an earlier period. Those may doubt the existence of this moral change, in which personal religion originates, who have never felt it; and ridicule it as fanatical, because they cannot comprehend it; but they who have felt it, ascribe its production to the grace of God; regard it as the noblest distinction which could be created in their favour; and can attest it by the evidence of experience, which is conclusive at least to themselves; and ought to be to others.

* See No. 21 of this Series, p. 4.

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

A VISIT TO THE RECTORY.

PART III.



"We set off early in the afternoon; and as we were passing through the turn-pike-gate our attention was arrested by a female who was sitting in the porch with an infant child in her arms, and another, about eight years old, standing by her side. There was an elegant neatness in her appearance, which at the same time indicated the extreme of poverty; and the unaffected modesty of her look made an appeal to our feelings, which we were neither able nor disposed to withstand." p. 2.

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A VISIT TO THE RECTORY.

PART III.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune ;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows, and in miseries."

Anon.

AN engagement had been made, when the ladies were at the Villa, to pay a visit to the Rectory; and Mrs. John Roscoe very cheerfully consented to make one of the party; but her husband declined, as he stood engaged to meet a few clerical brethren at the Rev. Mr. C——'s. We set off early in the afternoon; and as we were passing through the turnpike-gate our attention was arrested by a female, who was sitting in the porch with an infant child in her arms, and another, about eight years old, standing by her side. There was an elegant neatness in her appearance, which at the same time indicated the extreme of poverty; and the unaffected modesty of her look made an appeal to our feelings, which we were neither able nor disposed to withstand. We all knew that the annals of human woe record many tales of sorrow, which the sentimental philanthropist reads for the pleasure of the strong excitement which they produce; and we also knew, that artifice will sometimes give to misfortune a colouring and a description so highly wrought as to exceed the bounds of probability; but on this occasion we all listened with solemn interest to the narrative of grief which the sufferer reluctantly told us, fully conscious, from her manners and her tone, that she detailed facts which her own eyes had seen, and her own heart had felt. She informed us, that she was the only surviving child of a respectable tradesman who once lived in the town of B——; that her father, who had been a man of property, had given her a genteel education, and on the day of her marriage presented her husband with a fortune of £2000, which he was to employ in his trade. "My husband," she said, "unfortunately had a taste for show; he was fond of company; but I was not aware

that we were living beyond our income till the scene of wretchedness burst upon us in all its aggravations of misery. My father was ruined by the failure of a country bank; and it had such an effect upon his mind that he did not long survive it. This shock, which was like an earthquake passing under my domestic happiness, had scarcely been felt, before my husband became involved in trouble. We had a few faithful friends who offered us their sympathy; and one, who stepped forward to save us from ruin: but his advice and his warnings were rejected; and the gaming table was resorted to as an expedient against approaching calamity. But this accelerated and increased the evil. My husband failed; and there was only the wreck of a large property for the creditors. He was thrown into prison: there he lived in the worst of society, supported by the labour of my own hands till he obtained his discharge; when he left me and my children, ignorant of the place of his residence, and of his course of life. I lived for three years not knowing whether I was a widow or a wife; during which time it pleased Divine Providence to take from me two sons and a daughter; when I received a letter from my husband, informing me that he was in a good situation in London; and expressing a wish that I would go and live with him. I broke up my little establishment, and went; but I soon found that my most poignant sorrows were yet to be endured. He had obtained a very lucrative situation in a merchant's counting house, who had known us in the more prosperous days of our life; and his income was more than adequate for our support. But his habits had not been corrected by his misfortunes; he grew worse and worse. The love he once had for me was given to strange women; the theatre and the billiard room were the places of his evening and his midnight resorts; till, hurried on by the evil propensities of his nature, he did a deed which has now left me a widow, and these two children, fatherless. Twelve months only have elapsed since I left my little home of contentment to meet this overwhelming storm; and as we shifted our lodgings three times while in London, I could gain no parochial relief to take me back to the scene of my *earlier bliss and woe*. I sold the few things that re-

mained to me after the landlord had distrained for his rent, and set off with this babe, born to me in London, and this other child, in a stage waggon, to reach P——. When asleep, the first night, either a fellow traveller, or the driver of the waggon, took from me the little money and the few articles of dress I had in my box; and as I could not pay him his fare he refused to let me proceed with him. Yesterday I walked ten miles without tasting any food except a few turnips, which hunger, and the cries of my boy compelled me to take from a field; but as I reached the town of W—— in the evening, a humane gentleman gave me a shilling, with which I procured a night's lodging and a few biscuits. To-day we have travelled the same distance on the same fare; till the good man who keeps this gate kindly gave unto us some other food, and permission to rest ourselves."

This statement was corroborated by the testimony of Mr. Llewellyn, who, on ascertaining her name, and a few other circumstances, said he recollected the commitment of her husband, and expressed, in concurrence with the rest of the company, his regret that the law had inflicted the severity of its punishment. We instantaneously resolved to defray her travelling expences, and gave her a few pounds in addition, that she might not be driven to seek relief from the parish as soon as she reached P——. "Pray," said *Mrs. John Roscoe*, who was so deeply affected by her tale that she could not refrain from weeping, "by what means do you expect to support yourself and children?" "Indeed, Madam," she replied, "I cannot tell. I kept a day school for young ladies before I went to London, and had a flattering prospect before me; but the ignominious death of my husband will preclude me from resuming that occupation with any hope of success. Though I did not share in his crime, yet I must in his infamy; which will excite so many prejudices against my moral fitness to become a preceptress of the youthful mind, that I dare not venture on the experiment."

Mrs. Stevens. "Oh no! there is too much compassion in the human heart to turn away from the sufferings of a disconsolate widow, as though they were the idle tales of wanton folly; and too much goodness to

suffer the innocent to sink into contempt and infamy because the guilty have been involved in the fatal consequences of their crimes. Have you no friend yet living, who can be touched with the feeling of your infirmities? and who, being touched, may prove willing and able to assist you?"

"I hope, Madam," she replied, with a more elevated tone of voice, "I have one in heaven; but I do not know that I have one on earth. Friends grow not thick on every bough; especially on those whose fruit has fallen, and whose leaves are withered."

Mrs. Stevens. "But if you have a friend in heaven, you have one on earth; as he who represents himself the Husband of the widow, and the Father of the fatherless, has all power *in earth* as well as in heaven: and though you cannot see him, nor perceive the operations of his hand, yet he can open springs in the desert, and make the wilderness of desolation a fruitful field; he can silence the tongue of the gainsayer—allay prejudice—influence opinions—and raise up friends where we expect to meet with foes."

We requested her, on leaving, to write as soon as possible after her arrival at P—; and assured her that if we could, in any possible way, assist her, she might command our services.

I envy not the man of fortune who exhausts his resources in his personal gratifications, or who accumulates wealth for the spendthrifts of a future generation; while he keeps aloof from objects of human wretchedness, assigning as an excuse for withholding relief, when solicited, that he does not wish to have the reputation of a charitable man. Oh no! I can pass by his splendid mansion without casting one lingering look; and feel compelled, if I see him pass before me, to turn away, that my eye may fall on some less offensive object. He loses by his parsimony more than he gains; and exchanges the reputation of honour for the stigma of disgrace. He may love himself—but he will not gain the love of others; and though he may be surrounded by many who pay the homage of respect, and offer up the incense of flattery, yet they secretly despise the object of their adulation, and look forward to the day of his departure

with more satisfaction than they receive the report of his improved health; as they calculate on gathering up the spoils which he will necessarily leave to be divided amongst them. No! if I envy any, I envy the man whose heart is made of tenderness; who feels that it is more blessed to give than to receive; who is the living and the active representative of Him who went about doing good; whose ear is familiar with the tale of woe; and whose spirit goes forth, like the angel of mercy from the throne of the Invisible, to minister sympathy and relief to the mourning widow or the child of sorrow.

We had the pleasure of meeting at the Villa the Rev. Mr. Guion, and the Rev. Mr. S——, who was making a tour of charity on behalf of the Jews, and who was expected to preach in the evening for the Rev. Mr. Ingleby; when Mr. Llewellyn narrated the tale of woe we had just heard, which had a powerful effect on all present.

Mr. Ingleby. "We can scarcely venture out amongst the members of society, without being convinced that this world is correctly denominated *the valley of weeping*. Some few, I grant, are permitted to live as in the land of Goshen, and have the light of the divine favour shining in their tents; but the great majority groan under the pressure of calamities which they have neither power to remove nor mitigate. In some respects we all suffer in common; but there are trials which the sufferer feels to be peculiar to himself. He mourns apart from the community of grief—deems himself an exile from general sympathy—and often utters the self-torturing exclamation, *Woe is me, for I am undone!*"

Mr. Guion. "I apprehend, Sir, that every mourner regards his afflictions as possessing some peculiarity which belongs exclusively to his own case."

Mr. Ingleby. "He may; but he may be mistaken. If he extend his inquiries, he may often meet with others who have sustained the same losses—who have been visited by the same bereavements—and who have endured the same calamities."

Mr. Guion. "But occasionally we meet with some whose accumulations of sorrow give them a pre-eminence in suffering. I have often seen a widow, surrounded

by her fatherless children ; but I have never seen one whose history records such details of woe as the forlorn sufferer whose history we have just heard."

Mr. Ingleby. "No. Hers, if not an unparalleled, is an extraordinary case; and it exhibits to us, in a form which cannot fail to impress even the most volatile, the instability of earthly possessions, and the progressive tendency of sin when it is indulged. Had her unfortunate husband had the scene of his ignominious death imprinted on his fancy in the visions of the first night after he returned from the billiard-room, he would have said, 'Is thy servant a dog that he should die in this manner?' But he was led on from one stage of evil to another, becoming more hardened as he became more depraved, till at length he fits himself for destruction."

Mr. Guion. "But is it not surprising that men are so infatuated that they continue to pursue a course that must inevitably bring them and their families to ruin? Do they never pause to think of consequences? or do they derive so much real pleasure from the indulgence of their evil propensities as to counterbalance the tremendous risks they run?"

Mr. Llewellyn. "Yes, Sir, they often pause; as we can easily conceive the fell murderer does, before he executes his dreadful purpose; and they often think; but their thoughts trouble them:—they are the spectres of woe, the messengers of condemnation; they wring and torture the remaining sensibilities of the mind. Ah! could we trace the progress of that unhappy man who has just offered up his life to the injured laws of his country, bequeathing infamy to his family after having reduced them to beggary, we should possibly often see him alone—in agony—reproaching himself for his folly, his cruelty, his perfidy—resolving to break away from the fascinating charm which enslaved him—wringing his hands, and smiting his breast in the anguish of grief—betaking himself to prayer, and fixing the determination to redeem his character, and bring back the long-lost happiness of domestic life;—we should see him coming away from these high resolves and torturing reflections, invigorated and refreshed—pressing to his heart, still closer than ever, the wife and children of his youth—and rejecting with disdain the next temptation to evil."

But such is the fatal tendency of sin, when it has once gained an ascendancy over the mind, that these 'compunctious visitations' more generally accelerate its triumph than destroy its power. I once knew a young man who had been enticed to a play. He was then introduced to a society of men whose avowed object was to corrupt each other. But he had not proceeded far in this path to ruin before he was overtaken by a storm of mental agony, which raged with such desolating fury, that his reason was driven from her seat—his health was sacrificed—and his life in danger. But it pleased the Father of Mercies to restore him. He now resolved never more to return to his former companions. He made the most solemn vows; and, that they might have a more powerful effect, he wrote them in the blank leaf of the Bible which his pious mother gave him, just before her departure to heaven. And yet, within one month after he had transcribed his solemn vow in the page of that holy book, he presided at one of their meetings; and from that fatal night he devoted himself to the service of sin.*

Mr. Ingleby. "It is to be regretted that when *one* is ruined by his evil course he does not perish alone; he generally takes down others with him to the abyss of misery. What sorrow and what infamy has this unhappy man entailed on his widow and children!"

Mr. Guion. "But, Sir, ought we to discard a child because his father has been unfortunate? or exile a widow from the charities of life because her husband has been depraved?"

Mr. Ingleby. "Certainly not. They have the *stronger* claims on our compassion."

Mr. Roscoe. "There is, Sir," addressing himself to the venerable Mr. Ingleby, "a fine provision made, by the Author of our being, for objects of wretchedness, in that sympathy which is implanted in almost every bosom. It is true, that some have lived to see this native charm of the human character despoiled of its excellence; and they have sunk down into that mental callousness which the most plaintive notes, or the deepest moans have been incapable of softening. They are as

* If the reader wishes to know how this young man died he may see No. 7 of this Series, page 10.

composed in an hospital, where disease is wasting away the health and the strength of the young, and the aged, as in the shady retreat of a rural scenery; and send from their presence the child of sorrow with as much disdain as an upright judge would reject the fee of bribery."

Mr. Stevens. "I have often observed, with considerable regret, that too much familiarity with the objects of wretchedness has a tendency to injure the finer sensibilities of the most humane and compassionate."

Mr. Ingleby. "Why, Sir, the spirit of deception is abroad, and it often attempts to practise its insidious arts upon us. When detected, it not only excites indignation against the impostor, but awakens suspicion which impeaches the testimony of the virtuous sufferer. And as it is by an imperceptible process that every passion gains an ascendancy over our minds, the most humane sometimes sustain a material moral injury while unconscious of having received any demoralizing impression. I would not have benevolence entirely free from suspicion, but I would not have her uniformly governed by it. I remember once being deeply affected by a tale of woe, and instantaneously afforded all the relief in my power; but on inquiry I found that it was fictitious: and such was the influence it assumed over my mind, that I refused listening to the next applicant, whom I afterwards discovered to be an heir of glory in the depths of trouble."

Mr. Guion. "It is a question with some whether we should, in this country, where there is a legal provision made for the destitute, ever contribute any private charity?"

Mr. Stevens. "And some are for the entire abolition of this legal provision, leaving them entirely dependent on the resources of private charity."

Mr. Ingleby. "The provision which the State has very wisely and humanely made for their assistance, was never intended to supersede the necessity of private charities. This provision is made by Acts of Parliament; but will a good man consent that the representatives of the nation shall vote out benevolence from the community of feeling by a numerical majority? Shall the powers of this world strip the religion of a better of one

of its brightest ornaments, by denying her the privilege of feeding the hungry—clothing the destitute—and redeeming from wretchedness the outcast children of misery by the donations of her wealth? Oh no!”

Mr. Guion. “But the noblest charity is sometimes maligned by the spirit of this world. Hence we have many, who rank high in the scale of benevolence, who will press forward with their liberal donations when the temporal wants of others are to be supplied; but if you solicit their co-operation to supply their *spiritual*, you generally fail. They will subscribe for the support of an hospital or an infirmary, but not to a Sabbath School or a Missionary Society; or if, by the force of example, or the power of persuasion, they are induced to contribute, they seldom give in proportion to the importance of the institution.”

Mr. Roscoe. “Nor, Sir, ought this to excite our surprise. But few, even in this Christian country, estimate the value of their own souls; but few perceive their moral danger; but few prize that restorative scheme of mercy which has been given to us by the inspiration of the Almighty. A death-like stillness pervades the greater part of the community on the momentous question which ought to absorb the attention of every intelligent mind—*What must I do to be saved?* How, then, can we reasonably expect, that they who do not see the absolute necessity of scriptural truth for the promotion of their own happiness and moral improvement, will cordially co-operate with others in its diffusion? They assent, from education or custom, to the divine origin of Christianity, while they are ignorant of its nature and requirements; and as it is established by law, and every parish is provided with its church and its minister, they conclude that every exertion on the part of private individuals is a work of supererogation. The delusion, Sir, is as extensive as it is fatal; and how can it be expelled?”

Mr. Ingleby. “Only by Him who caused the light of morn to shine out of the darkness of chaos; and as we now see the day-star rising, we may indulge the hope that ere long the Sun of Righteousness will shine forth in the greatness of his strength, and disperse the mists of ignorance and of error which envelope the

human mind; and then all will have those clear perceptions of the truth, and of its importance, which will deeply penetrate the heart; and produce such a simultaneous movement for its universal propagation, that the bright vision of one of our favourite poets will be fully realized; when

‘The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shout to each other; and the mountain tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy;
Till nation after nation taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous Hæanna round.’”

Mrs. Stevens. “But I fear, Sir, that we shall not live to see that blissful hour.”

Mr. Ingleby. “We may not live in this world to see it; but if not, we shall see it from a more commanding point of observation. For as the traveller who has gained the summit of the hill can take a more extensive survey of the neighbouring, and the distant scenery, than he who has pitched his tent at the base, so the inhabitants of Mount Zion, whose power of vision is unobstructed by material elements, can perceive more clearly the progress of Messiah’s kingdom than those agents who are now employed in its extension; and when he comes in his glory, to cast down the prince of darkness from the throne which he has usurped, they will behold the mighty conflict, and celebrate its glorious termination.”

Mrs. Stevens. “I generally observe, that from whatever point you start, you contrive to get to heaven at last.”

Mr. Ingleby. “Why, Madam, I am not aware that I can get to a better place;—

‘There my best friends, my kindred dwell,
There God my Saviour reigns.’

My locks bespeak my age; and though I have strength to labour in my Master’s cause, and patience to wait the hour of dismissal, yet I often lean on the top of my staff, and sing,

‘Oh that the happy hour were come,
To change my faith to sight!’”

“But, Sir,” said *Mrs. Stevens*, “I hope you will live to a good old age, much beyond the allotted age of

man; for if the shepherd be smitten by death, the sheep of his fold will be scattered."

Mr. Ingleby. "They may, but none of them will be lost."

Mr. Guion. "The infliction of the sentence of death on man is the most calamitous event which awaits him in this world; and if he have no blissful hope of immortality it must, when the hour is come, sink him into unutterable agony. But yet the majority around us live as though that hour would never come; and if we venture to warn them of their approaching danger, we are either censured for our folly, or condemned for our uncharitableness."

"But I trust," said *Mr. Roscoe*, "that we have a good hope through grace, that when the *earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*. It is this that explains the enigma of our existence—that raises us up above the brutes that perish—that ennobles us—that invests the hour of our death with a more solemn, and grand, and sublime degree of interest than any preceding hour of our eventful life; that throws a dimming shade over the brightest terrestrial vision; and that awakens in the human soul anticipations of delight which surpass all that the eye hath seen, or the ear hath heard, or the tongue can describe."

"Yes, Sir," said the venerable *Mr. Ingleby*, "if the revelation of life and immortality, which the Scriptures contain, should prove at last a cunningly devised fable; and if the efficacy of the atonement, in purifying the conscience from guilt, should eventually turn out to be the mere phantom of fanaticism; and if these sublime anticipations of future glory, which we indulge, should never be realized,—we shall sustain no injury after death by cherishing our present belief. For if we should be annihilated at death, we shall not be conscious of our loss; and if we should pass into another state of existence, where the good and the evil mingle promiscuously together, the Supreme Being will not be offended with us for repenting of our sins, and endeavouring to please him."

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

ON ATTENDING AN EVANGELICAL
MINISTRY.



"I recollect having met, some time since, in the course of my reading, with the following judicious reply to a satirical question which a Catholic Bishop proposed to a Protestant,—*'Where was your religion before the days of Luther?'*—*'In the Bible, Sir.'* The Bible, as Bishop Stillingfleet very justly observes, is the religion of Protestants."

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1824.

ON ATTENDING AN EVANGELICAL MINISTRY.

"There stands the Messenger of Truth ; there stands
The legate of the skies !—His theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated law speaks out
Its thunders ; and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.
He 'stablishes the strong, restores the weak,
Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,
And, arm'd himself in panoply complete,
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms,
Bright as his own, and trains, by ev'ry rule
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
The sacramental host of God's elect."

Cowper.

As Mr. Roscoe had devoted a large portion of his life to biblical studies, and the various branches of literature which are inseparably connected with them, he was qualified to discuss theological questions with great facility ; and his passion for disputation having subsided into an ardent love of the truth, he no longer debated in argument for the honour of gaining the victory, but either to vindicate his opinions, when assailed, or to acquire more correct information on subjects which, till recently, he had but very imperfectly understood. The native hauteur of his spirit had now left him ; and though he still displayed the insignia of a high mental order, yet there was so much amiability in his manner, and so much docility in his temper, that, while he commanded respect, he did not fail to win esteem. During the first serious impressions which he received from the conversation of his daughter, the light of truth shone with too feeble a ray to produce that perfect and plenary conviction which permits the mind no longer to vacillate ; but when it came, not in

word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance, he received it with mingled emotions of astonishment and joy; and while he still retained his constitutional independence and ardour, these high qualities were so softened and animated by the love of Christ, that they gave a charm to his character and his conversation, of which every one was conscious but himself.

As his more public profession of religion was free from the charge of ostentation, so it was without reserve. It was not made to gratify caprice, or cast a reflection on the indecision of others, but in obedience to the authority of the Saviour; and as he had, before his conversion, acquired such extensive information on theological subjects, when that great event took place, like the apostles after the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, he was enabled to advocate the cause of truth with considerable ability, without requiring that preparatory course of instruction which is in general necessary. He still felt a veneration for the Establishment, which he had never forsaken; and though he respected the private character of the Rev. Mr. C——, whose ministry he had been accustomed to attend, yet he now felt it to be his duty to attend a more evangelical ministry. This step had been anticipated by his friends; and while some of them commended him, others were much displeased; but as he was too frank in his disposition to conceal a determination, when formed, he was too independent in his spirit to be controlled.

It was on the evening preceding the Sabbath that Mr. John Roscoe ventured to allude to the subject; when he informed him, that it was his intention in future to hear the Rev. Mr. Ingleby, whose views of truth were more in unison with his own than his old friend's, the Rev. Mr. C——.

Mr. John Roscoe: "I am not surprized at your determination, because I know that it is a very general thing for those who embrace evangelical principles to prefer an evangelical ministry; but will not such a step grieve your old friend, the Rev. Mr. C——."

Mr. Roscoe. "Perhaps it may; but ought I to

sanction, by my presence, those opinions which I believe to be erroneous?"

Mr. John Roscoe. "But though he differ from you on some points of theology, yet there are many on which you agree; and I think you may, like some others who have embraced evangelical principles, still attend a ministry which does not belong to this specific denomination, as you retain the right of rejecting what you disapprove."

Mr. Roscoe. "If the points on which we differ did not involve any essential doctrine of the Christian faith, I should deem it my duty to attend his ministry; but when I consider that he denies those truths which are, in my opinion, the vital parts of Christianity, and preaches what an apostle would call another Gospel, ought I to give him the sanction of my presence? If I sustained no personal moral injury under such a ministry, could I expect to derive any moral advantage? And beside, am I not responsible to God, and to society, for the influence of my example, as well as for my opinions and principles? If so, am I not under a most sacred obligation to be as cautious what I indirectly sanction, as what I recommend? Can I, without sacrificing the dictates of my conscience, recommend a person to believe, that he requires no other regeneration than that which he experienced when he was baptized? Can I recommend a person to believe, that his good deeds will atone for his evil actions? and that he requires no other qualification for heaven than a faithful discharge of his relative duties on earth? Impossible. If, then, I cannot recommend the adoption of these opinions, ought I to sanction them, by my presence, when they are enforced by others? I believe that men, before they are renewed in the spirit of their minds, live in a state of alienation from God—under the condemning sentence of his holy law—and are justly exposed to future and endless misery. I believe this on the testimony of the Sacred Writers; whose testimony is corroborated by the Articles and Homilies of our Church; and do not the same authorities teach us to believe that the truth, when preached in a pure and faithful manner, is the ordained means of their conversion and salvation? But if the

pure truth of the Gospel becomes corrupted, are we not taught to believe that the people perish? He who corrupts it, either wilfully or through ignorance, will stand responsible at the last day for the awful consequences of his conduct. But if I give to an anti-evangelical ministry, which I believe to be a corruption of the truth, the sanction of my presence, and the people should perish under it, shall I not be regarded as accessory to their ruin?"

Mr. John Roscoe. "But admitting that an anti-evangelical ministry is a corruption of the Gospel, and that it does not prove the means of the conversion and salvation of those who hear it, yet you must admit that they hear pure evangelical truth from the desk, which answers the same purpose. Hence I have known some who have imbibed the evangelical sentiments, recommend a continuance at their parish church on this account, though the ministry may not exactly accord with their views and taste."

Mr. Roscoe. "Yes, we have the pure Gospel in the desk, even when we have another Gospel in the pulpit; but though I have sat under it for near fifty years, I have never known it produce those moral effects on the people which result from an evangelical ministry. The prayers of our Liturgy are a fine composition, and aid the devotional feelings of a renewed Christian; but it is the *preaching of the truth* that God employs as the means of infusing the devotional spirit; and though some may recommend us to attend where the Gospel is confined to the reading desk, yet can we suppose that Paul would if he were on earth? Would he, who pronounced that man or angel accursed who dared to preach any other Gospel than that which he and his fellow-apostles preached, urge his friends or his hearers, if he were taking leave of them, to attend a ministry which he believed to be in opposition to the truth? No! impossible. Can we suppose that our Lord, who commanded his disciples *to take heed what they heard*, would, if he were again to appear on earth, recommend us to attend on a ministry which he believed was subversive of the truth, and the means of misleading the people? Impossible! If we cannot believe that *they would recommend us to do it, ought we to recommend*

others? Would it be wise to act in opposition to such high authority? would it be safe? would it be in accordance with the will of the Lord Jesus? and could we calculate on receiving his benediction,—*Well done, good and faithful servant?* Oh no! The mind, when disengaged from its prejudices and its associations, feeling the sacred influence of the truth, and anticipating the solemnities of the last day, trembles at the thought of recommending others to do what the Saviour if he were on earth would not sanction, and which, it done, may lead to a result too affecting to be contemplated but with the deepest mental agony.”

Mr. John Roscoe. “But I presume you do not mean, that every one who embraces evangelical sentiments ought to leave his parish church, if those sentiments are not preached there?”

Mr. Roscoe. “Most certainly I do.”

Mr. John Roscoe. “Indeed! Suppose one member of a family should embrace the evangelical sentiments, while all the rest retain their former belief; would you recommend that one individual to disturb the peace of his family, by straying to some other church to hear his favourite doctrines.”

Mr. Roscoe. “I recommend no one to disturb the peace of a family, and I rather think it will be found, when such peace is disturbed, it is owing to the spirit of resistance which is raised by the opposite party. Here is, for example, a single individual in the midst of a large circle of gay and fashionable acquaintances, who feels the renewing influence of truth, and makes an open profession of her faith in Christ. She now retires from the follies and vanities of the world, adopts habits which are decidedly religious, and, without infringing on the rights of others, she claims the privilege of attending that place of worship where she can derive most moral improvement. What law, either human or divine, is violated by such a decision? None. But as the profession of faith in Christ, in the midst of such a circle of the gay and the fashionable, is a novel thing, so repugnant to their taste, and considered by many of them so inelegant, and such a near approximation to the habits of the lower orders, she who makes it becomes an object of satire—invective—reproach, and

then is accused as being the cause of all the domestic misery which they originate."

"But you know, my dear," said *Mrs. Roscoe*, "that our domestic peace was destroyed as soon as Sophia imbibed her evangelical sentiments, and you know that religion has been the subject of debate between us ever since."

Mr. Roscoe. "But would it ever have been sacrificed if we had not done it? I recollect a sentence in one of her letters* which she addressed to us, that convinced me, at the time, of the injustice of our accusation; but now I look back on that dark period of our life with more pain than any former one. 'You say,' she remarked, 'that our peace, as a family, is broken up by the introduction of religion among us. Our peace is disturbed, I know; but do I disturb it? What have I done? I have *felt* the truth which you taught me to revere; and I am exemplifying its tendency to produce a conformity between the habits of a Christian and the precepts of the Bible. *May I not believe the truth, and obey it, without being considered as the destroyer of domestic peace?*' This pointed question convinced me that I ought not to oppose her; and though I regretted at the time that she had embraced views of truth which were different from my own, yet I admired the firmness and constancy which she uniformly displayed when they were assailed; and do not hesitate to say, that he who opposes or persecutes another on account of his religious principles and habits, is *treasuring up to himself wrath against the day of wrath.*"

Mr. John Roscoe. "I disapprove of persecution as much as you do; it is as impolitic as it is cruel, and seems to be one of those crimes which are left for the more savage and waspish part of our nature to commit. But still if we do not oppose force against a person who has embraced the evangelical principles, we may *reason*; and as I consider the desertion of a parish church a serious evil, you must permit me to remind you that, if you leave yours, and go to hear Mr. Ingleby, the stability of your character will be shaken. You

* The author recommends the letter to which he has now made allusion to the candid attention of the reader. It is contained in No. 18 of this Series.

have been considered as one of the pillars of the congregation—one of its ornaments—your decision has been admired, no less than your benevolence, and all regret that you should fall from your stedfastness, and exchange the religion of your forefathers, which is grown venerable for its antiquity, for a new religion, which has but recently sprung up amongst us.”

Mr. Roscoe. “This was one of the very arguments which the church of Rome employed against the Reformers, and if they had yielded to its influence, we should still have been in her communion. I recollect having met, some time since, in the course of my reading, with the following judicious reply to a satirical question which a Catholic bishop proposed to a Protestant,—*“Where was your religion, before the days of Luther?”* *“In the Bible, Sir.”* The Bible, as bishop Stillingfleet very justly observes, is the religion of Protestants. You say, that I have exchanged an old, for a new religion, but this I deny; I still admire the Liturgy, and I still believe the Articles of the church—I still retain that religion which you say is venerable for its antiquity; but then I believe it is not to remain a religion of mere forms and ceremonies, but that it is to operate on my heart, and produce within me the peaceable fruits of righteousness. The new religion, as you and others are pleased to term it, is not a corruption of the old, but it is the old religion of our venerable reformers, and the good old bishops and pastors of our church, revived in its primitive simplicity, and life, and power. It is the religion of the Scriptures, which enlightens, and renovates the inner man of the heart; which brings us into fellowship with the Holy One; which preserves the broad line of distinction between the real, and the nominal Christian; and by its progressive influence, makes us meet to become partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

Mr. John Roscoe. “But I do not think that you can consistently with your profession as a churchman, leave your parish church, to attend a church in another parish; the rector is the shepherd, whose spiritual jurisdiction extends over the whole parish, and the people are, ecclesiastically considered, his flock. Now,

has one sheep a right to stray into another fold for pasture?"

Mr. Roscoe. "But, suppose a sheep cannot live on the pasturage which is provided; and a neighbouring shepherd is willing to admit him amongst his fold, where he can obtain nutritious herbage; what law of self-preservation, or of infringement will be violated? Your figure of comparison is more fanciful than just; as we live in a land of freedom, where every man is permitted to exercise his own judgment on every religious question. We may believe what doctrines we please—practise what ceremonies we please—worship God where and when we please—hear what minister we please, without offending against any statute law, or subjecting ourselves to the interference, or interruption of others."

Mr. John Roscoe. "But you are not sure that you will approve of all the doctrines which Mr. Ingleby preaches, and may, after a while, be under the necessity of going elsewhere."

Mr. Roscoe. "If I should be under the necessity of going elsewhere, I ought to be thankful that I have the right of doing it, and also the opportunity. But as this is an hypothetical case, I feel under no obligation to reply to it, further than to say, that, as religion is now become essential to my happiness, and an enlightened ministry* no less essential to my spiritual improvement,

* "They that have any just sense of the importance of religion," says a judicious writer, "find that they need all the helps that God has appointed. Suppose the Sabbath were abolished for a few weeks; in what state, think you, would some of you find your minds? Why, you would feel as if you had scarcely any knowledge or power of religion at all." But there is no charm in the sanctity of the day to keep up the power of vital religion in the heart of a Christian, nor in the holy place where he may spend

"the consecrated hours,"—

this honour having been put on a faithful ministry, which exhibits the truth in its purity and force. What a loss does a Christian habitually sustain who deprives himself of such a ministry, and worships where angels never stoop to celebrate the conversion of one sinner to God! Instead of hearing that glorious Gospel, which enlivens and strengthens the mind, which purifies and ennobles it, and which brings the remote and unseen realities of eternity to moderate the impetuosity,

I shall go where I can derive most advantage. Places and forms—times and seasons—are the accidental associations of religion, not the integral parts of it, and that powerful and omnipotent ascendancy which they once retained over my imagination and prejudices, is now destroyed, and I am free to hear the truth wherever it is proclaimed; and to offer up my sacrifice of prayer and of praise in any place which he will condescend to visit with his presence."

Mr. John Roscoe. "But I presume you do not intend to leave the church, for any of these dissenting chapels which are springing up amongst us."

Mr. Roscoe. "You know that I am attached to the church, but I feel a stronger regard for the Saviour; and I am attached to her form and constitution, but I have a stronger regard for the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation; and if I could not hear it preached within the walls of the Establishment, I should consider it my imperative duty to go where I could. A disciple of Jesus Christ should endeavour to please him, but can it be pleasing to the Saviour, for one of his disciples to attend a ministry which does not honour

Him. Has he not commanded us to deny ourselves, and take up the cross and follow him? and suppose, when *He* is driven from the pulpit of the establishment, by the introduction of another Gospel, he go and animate a dissenting ministry with his presence, ought not our regard for his authority, and our attachment to his name, to induce us to obey his sacred injunction. Not to do it, in my opinion would be virtually saying, we love to hear the pure Gospel, when it is preached where we wish it, but when it is not, we will hear another gospel."

On the following Sabbath morning Mr. Roscoe and his family went, for the first time to hear Mr. Ingleby, and Mrs. John Roscoe accompanied them. His subject

and cool the ardour with which the fleeting shadows of time are pursued, the heart is often disquieted, if not with

"harsh and dissonant sounds,"

yet with anti-christian and dissonant sentiments, and the day of rest becomes one of perplexity and mortification; Providence having determined, that they who observe lying vanities shall feel that they have forsaken their own mercies. Jonah ii. 8.

was taken from the 3rd chapter of the book of the Revelations, and the 21st verse, *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.* After some few prefatory remarks, the venerable rector said, "*I shall endeavour to prove from these words, that the Christian is animated in his course by the hope of attaining the honours which await him at the end of it.*" This subject gave him ample scope for the exhibition of some of the most attractive, and impressive parts of revealed truth, and such was the ease, and energy, and pathos with which he spoke, that the audience listened with the deepest interest, and though he knew not that the Roscoes were present; yet, from the tenor of some of his remarks, they imagined that it was intended solely for them.

On their return home, some allusion having been made to the service which they had just attended, *Mrs. John Roscoe* said, "We have heard this morning a very judicious, and a very impressive sermon. I was very much pleased with the correctness, and force, and occasional elegance of his style of composition; but this was a source of gratification far inferior to the elevating, and sublime sentiments which he delivered. I could have sat another hour with great pleasure, but not without coveting the feelings of a man, who spake of the felicities of heaven, as one who had passed through all preparatory trials, and was in the actual possession of them." "I was much struck," said *Mrs. Roscoe*, "at the size and attention of the congregation. I saw no one gazing about, as though he were a stranger, in a strange place, but every eye appeared fixed on Mr. Ingleby, whose venerable locks and fine tones commanded the most devout attention. I have been more pleased than I expected, and if this be a specimen of evangelical preaching, I shall feel no reluctance to attend it."

This remark overpowered the feelings of Miss Roscoe, whose mind had been surcharged with a high degree of anxiety respecting the issue of this first visit of her honoured parents to the church in which she had so often listened with delight to the simple, yet sublime truths of revelation, and she could not refrain from shedding the

tear of joy, as a memorial of her gratitude to Him, who heareth and answereth prayer.

"Ycs," said *Mr. Roscoe*, "the service was interesting and impressive, the congregation was devout, and the preacher displayed a spirit, and a manner which became the sanctity of the place he occupied, and the responsibility of the high duties devolving on him; his mind was absorbed in his subject; and though he was not inattentive to the graces of action, and of expression, yet it was evident that his principal aim was, by shewing to us our danger, and the resources of our safety; and exhibiting before us in simple, yet sublime descriptions, the honours and felicities of the unseen world; so to warm and animate us, as to secure our devout and permanent attention to the momentous truths of discussion. I felt, when listening to him, that the revelation of mercy was not to him a barren theme of meditation, or a mere system of philosophical speculation, which by exercising the reasoning faculties of the soul, improves the intellect without refining the taste; but that it was, what it professes to be, a restorative scheme of salvation, intended, by renovating the heart, to restore man to his long lost purity and bliss—deriving all its efficacy from the grace of Him, by whom it was first announced, and reflecting a peculiar power on the agents of its external administration, by employing them as the instruments in accomplishing his design, in enlightening, consoling, and saving them that believe."

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[No. 41.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

**THE CONFLICT, AND THE TRIUMPH
OF THE CHRISTIAN.**



“The church in which the Rev. Mr. Ingleby preached, was very pleasantly situated in the rural part of the parish; and though its local distance from the village was unfavourable for the attendance of the people, yet it was generally thronged with attentive and devout hearers.”

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1824.

THE CONFLICT, AND THE TRIUMPH OF THE CHRISTIAN.

"The Christian is a man not merely contending, but successfully contending. He has not only entered on the enemy's country, but is daily gaining new victories over him. To this effect are the injunctions and declarations of the Apostle: Fight the good fight of faith: Lay hold on eternal life."

Cunningham.

THE church in which the Rev. Mr. Ingleby preached, was very pleasantly situated in the rural part of the parish; and though its local distance from the village was unfavourable for the attendance of the people, yet it was generally thronged with attentive and devout hearers. Indeed such was the impassioned fervour with which he preached, and such the power that accompanied the truth that fell from his lips, that the most careless were awed into an admission of the importance of religion; while those who *mixed faith* with what they heard, usually enjoyed a mental feast while listening to him. On the morning when the Roscoes formed a part of his audience, his subject was taken from Rev. iii. 21, *To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.* After a few introductory remarks, he said:

I. I will endeavour to prove that the Christian is animated in his course by a hope of the honours which await him at the end of it. ver. 21.

1. In his course he has to contend with a most powerful enemy. Who is this powerful enemy? The world! I do not mean to insinuate that Satan does not oppose him by his temptations, but as he generally employs some external objects, or circumstances, as the medium through which they are presented to the mind, I presume by fixing on them, I shall be able to give a more visible—a more tangible form, to the great enemy of our faith and our happiness. The world sometimes opposes the Christian by its frowns, its censures, and its threatenings. Here is one who rises in the bosom of an irreligious family, or connection, and professes the faith of Christ! What treatment does he meet with? Applause? No, censure! Is he allowed to pursue the noiseless tenor of his way

without opposition? No! in some instances bonds and imprisonment await him; in others he is threatened with the loss of parental and social regard—stigmatized by his nearest relatives and professed friends, as a fanatic—an enthusiast—and reproached as though he carried about with him the evil principles, by which the peace and prosperity of the world were to be destroyed. This is a species of persecution more refined than that which made such havoc amongst the disciples of Jesus Christ in former ages, but it is not less cruel; and though it may not attract such a high degree of public attention, yet it requires great firmness to resist and overcome it.

Sometimes the world opposes the Christian by its fascinations. He rises in his profession—his wealth increases—the number of his associates multiply—his society is courted—deference is paid to his judgment—his virtues place him on the vantage ground of public opinion—and the claims of friendship and of patriotism are urged upon his attention with a force which he cannot withstand. Amidst all this halo of worldly glory which surrounds him, is there no enemy lurking? Is there no subtle influence corrupting and demoralizing the ethereal temper of his mind? No evil passions awaking up in his *inner man*, to hush to a state of death-like slumber, his pious principles? Are there no habits forming which will unfit him for the sublime and hallowed exercise of communion with God?

It is not the rude blast of adversity which forces from the Christian pilgrim the cloak of his profession, but the warm sun of prosperity; for while the winds blow he wraps it closer around him, but when he feels the genial heat, he gradually unfolds it, till he is tempted to relieve himself from its incumbrance.

“More the treacherous calm I dread,
Than tempests bursting o’er my head.”

2. The world though an enemy, is an enemy over which the Christian triumphs.

Some who have assumed the Christian name, have been so terrified by the threatenings of the world, or so allured by its smiles, that they have renounced their profession of religion and returned to their former state of impiety, or indifference. Yes, how often have the daughters of Judah mourned over the defection of their

numbers! But, Christian brethren, be not alarmed, stronger is he who is for you, than they who are against you. The captain of your salvation, who overcame and is *set down with his Father on his throne*, will secure to you the victory which is to precede your triumphant exaltation. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith, 1 John v. 4. This faith is of divine origin; and such is its imperishable nature, that no force can destroy it; such its energy, that it raises an impassable and indestructible barrier against your potent adversary; and such its mystic influence, that it invests the invisible realities of the eternal world, with a power vastly superior to every object which is either seen or felt. In calling your attention to the nature and the operations of this faith, I would observe,

(1.) That it leads us to form a proper estimate of the precise degree of respect which we ought to pay to the threatenings, and the smiles of the world. Matt. x. 28, *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

(2.) Faith leads the mind to such an habitual association with the Redeemer, that the manifestations of *his* favour are preferred to any source of gratification which the world can present.

If, my Christian brethren, I could give you this morning the entire history of the visible church, what scenes should I disclose! Here you would see the faithful minister torn from the bosom of his family, and from the embraces of his devoted charge—hurried along through a crowd of enraged spectators—despised and insulted—denied the melancholy pleasure of bidding the last adieu to the objects of his fondest regards—thrust into a gloomy prison, where, laden with the chains of delinquency,

Alas! nor wife, nor children more may he behold,
Nor friends, nor sacred home.

But even in this recess of infamy, which the material light of heaven is forbidden to illumine, his mind walks abroad in her native majesty, looking with an air of comparative indifference on the implements of cruelty, prepared against the day of torture, and he says,

“Nor exile I, nor prison fear,
 Love makes my courage great:
 I find a Saviour, ev’ry where;
 His grace in every state.

Nor castle walls, nor dungeons deep,
 Exclude his quick’ning beams:
 Here I can sit, and sing, and weep,
 And dwell on heavenly themes.”

If I could bring over your imagination, the gone-by visions of former times, you would see the venerable sire—the aged matron—the lovely virgin—the ardent youth, willing to embrace death in its most horrid forms, rather than renounce the faith of Christ to partake of the pleasures and honours of this world. You would in that case hear them singing the most enchanting songs, even amidst the loud crackling of the flaming faggots, which are gradually consuming their vital parts; and behold the features of a glorified spirit, impressed on their countenance, as the columns of smoke are drifted aside by the gentle breezes of heaven.

How will you account for this magnanimity—this insensibility to life—this utter abstraction from pain, during its most violent tortures—this ethereal participation of the joys of eternity, amidst the insults, the reproaches, the invectives, which infuriated malice disgorges on her half consumed victims?

To the eye of philosophy this fact appears as a phenomenon incapable of solution, unless it be found in the derangement of the intellect, or the ardour of ungovernable passion. But when presented to the keener eye of Christianity, she discerns the exercise of that faith, which so associates the mind of its possessor with the person of the Redeemer, that a separation becomes impossible. Who, when such scenes are passing before him, is not reminded of the triumphant language of the Apostle; Rom. viii. 35—39, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth,*

nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And allow me to say, my Christian brethren, that if there are not in the present day, such splendid examples of ardent attachment to the Lord Jesus, it must not be attributed to a want of principle, but to a want of an opportunity. Cannot you perceive the operation of this great principle in that young disciple, who is willing to sacrifice all his connections, rather than renounce his attachment to Jesus Christ;—in that more advanced Christian, who takes more pleasure in the exercises of public devotion, than in pursuing his lawful occupations; and who feels a higher elevation of bliss, by one sacred manifestation of his Lord's favour, than can be produced by any terrestrial object.

(3.) Faith leads us to anticipate the possession of the honours of the heavenly world. These are expressed in our text, ver. 21, *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne.* The human nature of the Redeemer, which is still united to his divine, is seated on the throne of the eternal Father; which denotes a participation of his glories and his honours—What a lovely! what a grand! what a transporting scene will burst open on a glorified spirit, the moment after its dismissal from the body. He will see the Redeemer elevated on the throne of the divine majesty; wearing the diadem of the celestial world; looking around him with the most benign satisfaction, on those who are placing their crowns at his feet; while they unite to sing, *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.* Rev. i. 5, 6. Is this fictitious? It may be in your estimation; but it is not in the Christian's. He believes it; and in addition to this, he believes, that if he overcome, he shall partake, in some small degree, of the same honour, and of the same bliss, which the Redeemer more largely possesses. That like him he shall be hailed as a conqueror. Yes! when you enter the heavenly world, you will thus be addressed *by him who sitteth on the throne,—Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few*

things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. And will this honourable attestation awaken no sublime emotions in the vast assembled throng? Will they stand like so many mutes, while their Lord, and yours, proceeds to conduct you to your sublime elevation of honour, and of felicity? No. If when you felt the mystic change, they rejoiced even amidst all your obscurity, and imperfection; where shall we find language to express the enraptured feeling with which they will celebrate your final triumph.—Like him you will be rewarded as a conqueror; Heb. xii. 2, *Who for the joy which was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* The crown, the throne, the splendour of heaven's most radiant glory, the high satisfaction of having finished the work given him to do, animated the Redeemer in the days of his humiliation and sufferings; and having achieved on the cross the noble conquest, he passed on to receive the grand investiture. And what less than this animates you, my Christian brethren? The victor's crown and throne will be awarded to you, not as a meritorious reward for your conquest, but as a recompence for your labour; not to elevate you for a season above the first-born inhabitants of heaven, that you may have the lower fall, but to mark you out, as the more favoured objects of the divine regard, who, having first suffered with Christ, will be seated with him on his throne, that you may reign together.

3. And it is the belief of these high honours that now operates as the most powerful motive to the constancy of our Christian profession. I admit, that the assurance of attaining to this state of exalted felicity is not always present to influence *every* mental decision—to stimulate to *every* mental exertion—to operate on *every* mental sacrifice; but the hope of attaining it is so combined with all our principles, and all our anticipations, that if we were to watch the process of our mental movements, we should invariably discover it. Am I tempted to draw back from my profession? What! forego the sublime prospects which eternity unfolds to my view! Am I persecuted for righteousness' sake? Do I not read,—*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righte-*

ownness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you? Matt. v. 10—12. Am I induced to exert my influence—to give my property—to consecrate my time to advance the cause of the Redeemer? Do I not, after adoring the grace which implanted such a disposition in my heart, advert to that ulterior state of servitude, *where he that now soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.*

II. I will now proceed to rescue this motive from the imputations which have been preferred against it.

1. To endure the contest with the world on account of some distant reward, is a selfish motive. Admitted; but that does not prove that it is an improper one. What act of the mind has ever been performed where there has not been an admixture of this motive as its impelling cause. What first induced you to repent and pray? Was it not a perception of the misery to which you were inevitably exposed; and an overpowering anxiety to be delivered from it? What induced you to seek salvation through faith in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ? Was it not the hope of obtaining that peace of mind which passeth all understanding? What induces you to hold communion with God in the exercise of prayer and meditation, and the public services of devotion? Is it not the pleasure which it affords you? What induces you to watch against the motions to evil—to resist the temptations by which you are assailed—to mortify the sinful propensities of your heart? Is it not the satisfaction which you feel in these acts of self-denial and resistance? And if, like Moses, you should *have respect unto the recompense of reward*, while attempting, in the exercise of an operative faith in the testimony and on the grace of God, to overcome the threatenings and allurements of the world, why should you impeach the purity of the motive by which you are impelled, when it appears to be sanctioned by such high authority, and is, in fact, the only one by which you can be sustained in the arduous conflict.

2. *But we are told, that it is a motive which cannot*

operate with unremitting constancy, because comparatively few have an uninterrupted assurance of attaining to this high honour. I admit, my brethren, that but few have an uninterrupted assurance of future and eternal glory; but do not all who have that faith in the mediation of Christ, which is of the operation of the Holy Spirit, indulge a good hope through grace? They may not be able to adopt the triumphant language of the apostle, and say, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day,* 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8; but yet they know in whom they have believed;—and though they may have at times some overshadowing doubts, which intercept their vision of future bliss, they hope that He who saveth to the uttermost will not suffer them to perish. And this hope, when it arises from the mediation of Jesus Christ, will be found to resist the powers of this world, as steadfastly as the most unwavering assurance. Indeed I have known some, who have trembled to speak with confidence of attaining the recompense of reward, who have been amongst the most exemplary Christians of the age. Removed at an equal distance from the dread of perishing, and the assurance of being saved, they have been enabled to cherish and display those dispositions and principles which have satisfied their judgment of their safety, without affording an entire relief to all their anxious solitudes.

3. It is a motive, we are told, which, in its operation, tends to invest human actions with a degree of merit, which is altogether unscriptural. But how so? My faith in the divine testimony I acknowledge to be the gift of God;—its power to resist and overcome the world depends on his perpetual assistance;—and the honour and felicity which I hope ultimately to attain will be bestowed on me, not as the reward of merit, but of free and undeserved favour. How, then, can the operation of that faith which is given, and given for the specific purpose of overcoming the world by its influence over the mind, be said to invest human actions with any degree of merit, when its bestowment in this life, and its honours in the next are attributed to the undeserved grace of God?

Go, then, my brethren, into the world; not to imbibe its maxims—not to conform yourselves to its customs—not to allow either its fascinations or its frowns to divert you from *the prize of your high calling*; but to demonstrate the power of that faith by which you are finally to overcome it. You may not be able to subdue its enmities against your religious principles and attachments, but you may prove that you know how to disregard them; and though you are not required to become a recluse or a stoic, yet you are to let the light of purity shine with such a bright and steady lustre; that the workers of evil will feel themselves obliged to shun your society rather than covet it.

As the Roscoes were not at their parish church on the Sabbath, Mrs. and Miss Denham called the following morning to ascertain the cause. "We were prodigiously affected yesterday," said *Mrs. Denham* to *Mrs. Roscoe*, "by not seeing any of you in your pew. We had a most charming sermon. I think Mr. C—— surpassed himself. He read most excellently. We should have called in the evening, but we know that Mr. Roscoe begins to have some scruples about Sunday parties." "Perhaps," said *Mrs. Roscoe*, "you will be surprized when I tell you that we all went to hear Mr. Ingleby." "And did you?" rejoined *Miss Denham*, "I heard him once. He is a most solemn preacher. I think if I were to hear him often I should be brought over to his religion, for he enforces it with so much earnestness." "You know, my dear," *Mrs. Denham* replied, "my objections to his religion; and I hope you will never think of leaving your own for it." "Why, Mamma, if I speak the candid sentiments of my mind, I must confess that I have no religion to leave." "My dear Matilda! you shock me. Why, did you not learn the Catechism? and cannot you say the Belief, and the Lord's Prayer? and when you have taken the Sacrament you will be a very good Christian. I have no doubt. I suppose (looking at *Mrs. Roscoe*), you found the church prodigiously full." "Yes," replied *Mrs. Roscoe*, "there was a very large, and a very attentive congregation." "Yes," said *Mrs. Denham*, "so I have heard, and I wonder at it. I wonder what charms people can see in *such a gloomy religion* to be so fond of it. I am told *he preaches so awful*, and with so much earnestness,

that he makes people take up with his religion, whether they will or no. Pray how did Mr Roscoe like his preaching? He is a sensible man, and one on whose judgment we may place some dependence, notwithstanding his religious eccentricities." "Mr. Roscoe," *Mrs. Roscoe* replied, "was very much pleased. He thinks Mr. Ingleby a very intelligent, and a very eloquent preacher. Indeed we were all so much delighted, that it is our intention to hear him again." "There, Mamma," said *Miss Denham*, "I told you it would be so. Is he not, Ma'am, a most beguiling preacher? I have often wished to hear him again; and yet I wonder at it, for he made me feel so acutely. What was the theme of his discourse? (Mrs. John Roscoe now entered the parlour, with Miss Roscoe.) He preached about the difficulties which a Christian has to overcome before he can enter heaven." "I wish," said *Mrs. John Roscoe*, "you had been with us; all your objections against evangelical preaching would have been removed. I never enjoyed a sermon so much. We certainly act a very unwise part, to cherish such antipathies against a style of preaching which is so well calculated to direct our attention towards that eternal world to which we are all hastening." "It is very proper," *Mrs. Denham* replied, "that we should all think about going to heaven; but if we think too much on that subject it will certainly depress our spirits. Mr. C—— very justly remarked yesterday, in his discourse, that our Saviour *never prayed that we should be taken out of the world*; and I think it would be wrong if we were to desire it." "But you know," *Mrs. John Roscoe* replied, "that we *must* leave it; and as we know not how soon, is it not of importance that we should be prepared?" "Oh certainly," said *Mrs. Denham*, "and I doubt not but when our Maker is pleased to take us unto himself we shall be quite resigned to our fate; but for my own part, (rising as she spoke,) I would much rather live than die." "I hope," said *Mrs. Roscoe*, "you and Miss Denham will accompany us next Sunday to —, to hear Mr. Ingleby, as I have no doubt you will be much pleased. No one could have had stronger prejudices against that good man than myself; and though he advanced some things which I did not very well under-

stand, yet he preached with so much ease, and with such animation, that I felt more of the importance of religion last Sunday than I ever felt before." "I have no doubt," *Mrs. Denham* replied, "but Mr. Ingleby is a very good man, and a most excellent preacher; but you know that Mr. Denham is so attached to his religion, that he would not like for us to change ours."

"You see, my dear," said *Mrs. Denham* to her daughter, as they were going home, "the propriety of the suggestion which I gave you some time since, to avoid associating with Mrs. Stevens; as it is to her influence we may attribute the entire secession of the Roscoes from our social parties. They are all gone, as you may perceive from our interview with them this morning; and I fear their example will influence others. It is prodigiously affecting to see what progress this evangelical religion is making in the higher circles of life; and no one can say where it will end." "But, Mamma, one thing is certain; if we judge from observation, they are happier with their religion than we are with ours." "Yes, my dear, they say they are happy; but what pleasure can there be in religion?" "I don't know, Mamma; but I am sure that Mrs. Stevens and Miss Roscoe have a larger share of mental enjoyment than I have. I often feel a gloom come over my mind, which I can neither remove nor account for; and sometimes I feel such a singular depression of spirit that I am inclined to read my Bible; but, unfortunately, that increases the evil I wish removed." "Why you know, my dear, you have been rather more confined at home than usual, which has relaxed your spirits too much; but as our parties will soon meet, they will recover their tone, and then the gloom of which you speak will go off. But I must request you to avoid associating with your old friends, especially now you are somewhat depressed in your spirits; for if you do, they will bring you over to embrace their religious opinions; which would be, as I have often told you, a most overwhelming affliction to your father and myself." "I cannot, Mamma, efface from my memory the sermon which I once heard Mr. Ingleby preach. It sometimes recurs to my recollection with a force that quite overpowers me. I hope God will bless us, and save us."

[No. 42.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

THE FATAL VISIT.



"He found Miss Denham sitting in an arm chair beside the fire, with a Bible open before her on the table. There was a melancholy cast on her countenance, which formed a very impressive contrast to the brilliancy of her eye, and the beautiful, though fatal hectic, which flushed her cheek. On taking his seat opposite to her, he saw the nurse cautiously removing the chess-board, with a pack of cards on the top of it, which stood on a chest of drawers behind the door."

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1824.

THE FATAL VISIT.

"Smitten," while all the promises of life
Are opening around her ;"

And yet

"She bowed her head in quietness.—She knew
Her blighted prospects could revive no more,
Yet she was calm, for she had heaven in view."

As I was taking my morning ramble I perchance met Miss Roscoe, and at her request accompanied her to Mr. Denham's, where we met Mr. John Ryder, who was paying his addresses to Miss Matilda. He was a fine figure—polite, yet conceited—possessed of a tolerable share of common-place wit—very loose in his principles—just *the very thing for a fellow* of a fashionable society. Mr. Denham was a very pleasant, good-natured man, who inherited a handsome fortune, which had been accumulated by the industry and frugality of his ancestors; and, as his habits were rather penurious, he had very much increased it. He originally farmed one of his own estates; but as he had no son to beat the clods of the valley, or pen the sheep in the fold, he disposed of it by lease to a very good tenant, and retained only a few acres of meadow land for his cow and his horses. He was a churchman of the old school;—regular in his attendance at the morning service—devout, and rather loud in his responses—a decided enemy to all innovation, often saying *that no one ought to forsake the religion of his fathers*. In the afternoon he regularly took his nap and his pipe; and in the evening amused himself sometimes in one way, and sometimes in another. He was now verging fast towards sixty; and having supported an honourable character amongst his friends and his neighbours, and made his will, he had nothing else to do but to receive his rents, and watch the sun of his life, which was gradually going down under the calm serenity of an unruffled evening.

Mrs. Denham, though possessed of some of the moral qualities of her husband, belonged to a very different cast. She loved money—but she was rather more fond of spending it; and such was her passion for dress, and for the elegant and fashionable amusements of high life,

that she sometimes, rather imprudently, endangered the harmony of domestic peace in seeking its gratification. She excelled Mr. D. in strength of intellect, and in wit, and was more benevolent in her disposition; but her temper was not *quite so mild*, nor did she always act so prudent and upright a part as he generally performed. She was attached to home, except in the winter, when she wished to spend a few months at Bath; and in the summer, when Brighton, or Cheltenham, or some other fashionable resort, presented more powerful attractions than the dull uniformity of a country life. She was fond of reading the lighter productions of the press; and would sometimes, on a Sabbath-day, read a chapter in her Bible, to keep up a family custom; but the grave exercise of meditation and reflection was *particularly* offensive to her taste. She could quote a few passages from that holy book; but no one with more emphasis, than the commonly perverted aphorism of the wise man,—*Be not righteous over much*. She was facetious; never more at home than when moving in a gay circle; easily susceptible of offence, but not so easily appeased; passionately attached to this life, but unwilling to be reminded of the approach of another.

Miss Denham inherited the failings and the excellencies of both her parents; and hence she alternately exhibited a moral character whose more prominent features bore a striking resemblance to each. But as she was animated by the ardour of youth, there was more sprightliness in her gaiety, and less gravity in her decorum—more flippancy in her invectives on the religious people around her, and less of the appearance of devotion when engaged in the solemnities of public worship. There was so much of the finesse of fashionable life about her, that she thought it less disreputable to be altogether ignorant of the Scriptures, and the great truths on which the eternal destiny of the soul depends, than to betray a familiarity with them; and though there was an amiable sweetness in her disposition, which could not but relish the high moral accomplishments of her friends, Mrs. Stevens and Miss Roscoe, yet her enmity against their religious principles was at once bitter and sarcastic.

We found, after Mr. Ryder had left, that he had

been to press Mrs. and Miss D. to join a party which he was forming to go to a public ball in the following week at B——; and after hearing a great deal about the inconvenience of the distance, &c. &c. we were informed that they had consented to go.

The morning of the day on which they went to this scene of gaiety was fine and beautiful. The heavens displayed their softened glories; as the sun threw his enfeebled rays over the vast expanse, no cloud arose to intercept his beams: the air moved in gentle and refreshing breezes; and had we seen the budding trees, or the opening flowers, we should have concluded that it was the month of April rather than the beginning of November. But about noon the wind suddenly changed; the clouds were seen passing and repassing each other, as though they were conducting some mysterious intercourse between distant regions, telling the affrighted inhabitants of the approaching storm. The rain began to descend in torrents, and the wind, let loose from its secret dwelling-place, blew where it listed;—we heard its awful sound, and felt the earth becoming tremulous under our feet. At ten o'clock the fury of the tempest abated, and the inhabitants of the Villa were preparing to retire to rest; when, after about half an hour's pause, it returned to the work of terror and devastation, and continued to rage, with increasing violence, through the greater part of the night.

It was in this dark and tempestuous night that Mr. Ryder and his party had to return from the ball; and it was with great difficulty they reached home. The next morning Miss Denham complained of a slight cold, and it was thought proper that she should remain in her own room during the whole of the day. On the following day she still felt unwell, but not ill; and as there was a select party engaged to tea and cards, she dressed and appeared amongst them. She was gay and sprightly; but the dew of health was gone off her countenance; her eyes did not sparkle with their usual lustre; and all received an impression from her general appearance, that some fatal disease had seized her, though no one had courage enough to mention it.

As there never had been much illness in the family, no one thought of sending for any medical gen-

tleman, supposing that Miss Matilda had merely taken a cold from which she would soon recover. Her Mamma sat by her bed-side till near twelve o'clock, when she left her in a sweet sleep, having commissioned her favourite servant to watch her through the night. About three in the morning she became restless, and asked for some toast and water, which she drank with great eagerness, and then slumbered on for the space of another half hour. She arose again, and asked for more water; complained of its being bitter; and uttered some incoherent sentences, which induced the nurse to call up her parents. She became composed again; slept rather more soundly; but about five she awoke, and asked for more water; and when returning the cup to the hand of her mother, she said, "I have had a most strange night—I have seen strange sights—I am very ill—I ought not to have gone to the ball—I knew better—I should not like to pass from the theatre to the judgment seat of Christ!" "O my dear," said Mrs. Denham, "do not suffer your mind to be distressed. It was a very unfavourable night; but I hope it will please the Almighty to restore you to health very soon. Your Papa has sent William for Dr. Bailey, and we expect him here every minute."

At length, after two hours' long suspense, the trampling of the horses down the lane announced the approach of the Doctor, who was soon after introduced to her by her tender-hearted father. He instituted a few inquiries—examined her pulse—looked grave—and then abruptly retired below, followed by both her parents, who felt too anxious to know his opinion even to ask him for it. "Miss Matilda," he said, "is very ill—she must be kept very composed. I will send her some medicine, which she must take immediately, and I will see her again before noon."

These directions were strictly adhered to; but the fever raged with greater violence, and she became delirious. She occasionally gave utterance to half-formed sentences, which indicated that she sometimes thought herself listening to a sermon *on the loss of the soul*, and at other times enjoying the gaieties of fashionable life. Often did the heart-struck father, with hurried steps, walk up and down the lane, between the hours of ten and twelve,

to look for the Doctor; and just as he was sending William to hasten his return, he saw him coming. After his second interview with his patient the mother ventured to say, "Do you think, Sir, the dear creature is dying?" "Why no," he replied, "she is still very ill, but no worse than when I saw her in the morning. She may recover, and I hope she will; but every thing depends on her being kept composed." "But, Sir, she is at times very delirious; utters sayings frightful to the ear." "That must not astonish you, Madam; it proceeds from the nature of the complaint; it is a painful, but not a dangerous symptom. I want to subdue her fever, and if I can do that, we have nothing to fear. I will see her again in the evening."

She continued during the afternoon much the same; but towards evening she was more composed; knew, and conversed a little with her mother; complained less of pain and of thirst; and was so much revived, that the Doctor said, on leaving her, that he had very little doubt but she would recover. She continued during the four following days much in the same state; but on the turn of the seventh day the fever left her. As the Doctor had been very particular in recommending her parents to keep up her spirits, to prevent her ruminating on the subject of religion, her Mamma occasionally read to her some of the most amusing paragraphs from the most amusing novels which she could procure: and generally passed away the dull and tedious hours of the evening at cards. But though she had regained her vivacity, and talked with her accustomed ease on the past scenes of her life and the prospects which futurity exhibited to her ardent fancy, yet she gradually became weaker and weaker which convinced her physician that some incipient disease was undermining the native vigour of her constitution; but yet he did not despair of her final recovery.

She had passed through the dreary months of winter, and was fast hailing the opening spring, which they all thought would bring back her long lost health, when it became too evident that death was lurking in ambush, and that the gay and interesting Matilda must die. *One physician was called in after another, and every expedient which human skill could devise was resorted*

to; but no power could arrest the progress of that flattering yet fatal disorder which gradually wastes away the health and the life of mortals. As soon as she was informed that there was no hope of her recovery, she requested to be left alone till she rang the bell. This request was complied with, all went below, and sat for some time weeping together. "She is now," said the father, "making her peace with God; let no noise be heard; this work requires stillness, may Heaven bless her in the act." The bell rang, the anxious mother was immediately with her, she was less composed, her voice faltered, as she said, "I fear Mamma, I am not fit to appear before the judgment seat of Christ; I wish to see some clergyman, and you will oblige me by sending for the venerable Mr. Ingleby." "Mr. Ingleby," my dear, said the astonished mother, "do you not mean Mr. C.?" "No Mamma, I wish to see Mr. Ingleby, and I wish to see him immediately; I have not long to live, and I wish now to turn the current of my thoughts and feelings towards another world."

"I hope," said the weeping father, on Mrs. Denham's entrance into the parlour, "our dear Matilda feels her soul happy." "Oh no! she is not happy. Her soul is in trouble. She wants a spiritual comforter. She says that she is not fit to appear before the judgment seat of Christ. She wishes to see the Rev. Mr. Ingleby, and requests that you will send for him immediately." He is a good man," said *Mr. Denham*, "he has made many happy in their last hours, and I hope he will bring words of peace to the troubled spirit of our dear dying child."

As the news of Miss Denham's approaching dissolution spread through the parish, many wept, and many sent to inquire after her; but none were more deeply affected than the Stevens's and the Roscoe's; but though they had often sent, and often called, yet they had not been permitted to see her more than once, and then she was flushed with the high expectation of a speedy recovery. Mr. Ingleby was spending the afternoon at the Villa, when the servant brought him the following note.

Rev. Sir,

My dear child is very ill, and in great spiritual trouble, and she very much wishes to see you ~~this~~
[42]

evening, if you can make it convenient to visit her; by so doing you will confer a lasting obligation on a deeply afflicted family.

Yours truly,

J. DENHAM.

Brush Wood House.

They all wept as the note was read, and after the venerable man of God had sent back his answer, he said, "let us pray." He knelt down, and wrestled for her soul, as one who had often presented the fervent, and effectual prayer of faith; and then hastened to the chamber of affliction. He found Miss D. sitting in an arm chair beside the fire, with a Bible open before her, on the table. There was a melancholy cast on her countenance, which formed a very impressive contrast to the brilliancy of her eye, and the beautiful though fatal hectic which flushed her cheek. On taking his seat opposite her, he saw the nurse cautiously removing the chess board, with a pack of cards on the top of it, which stood on a chest of drawers, behind the door. Having expressed a wish that she might be left alone with Mr. Ingleby, her parents withdrew, and she then informed him, that she had sent for him to give her the benefit of his instruction and his prayers. "I have lived, Sir," she said, "a gay and thoughtless life, but not a happy one. I have often felt disgusted with the sources of my amusements, and envious of the superior felicity of our mutual friends at the Villa, but never had resolution enough to abandon the objects of my pursuit, nor to seek theirs. It hath now pleased God to check me in my career, and I know that in a very few months, if not weeks, the awful realities of an eternal world will open upon me." "To enter the eternal world, said *Mr. Ingleby*, "in an unprepared state, would be more awful than the imagination can conceive; but your present anxiety on this subject, may be regarded as a favourable symptom that God is dealing graciously with you; but as many are alarmed in the immediate prospect of death, and pray for mercy, when they can continue no longer in a course of sin; you will permit me to warn you against catching at a premature hope, which may prove more fatal, be-

cause deceptive, than the most poignant feelings of anguish." "Oh, Sir, Miss D. replied, I have no hope, my soul is deeply depressed, I cannot look back on the scenes of my past life without being amazed at my folly. I followed the multitude, because custom led the way; but now I must die alone. But I am not fit to die." "Why do you suppose," said *Mr. Ingleby*, that you are not fit to die?" "Because, Sir," Miss D. replied, "I am a sinner; I always thought I was, when I ever thought on the subject, but now I *feel* that I am?" "And how long," said *Mr. Ingleby*, "have you felt yourself a sinner?" "Oh, Sir," she replied, and wept as she spoke, "not till after I was informed of my danger; and this aggravates my misery, because I fear that it is a dread of punishment, which disturbs my false peace, rather than a pungent sorrow for my sins?" "Had you ever any convictions," said the good man, "during your career of fashionable pleasure, that you were acting so unwise and dangerous a part?" "Oh yes," she replied with strong emphasis, "often Sir, very often; conviction would sometimes flash over my mind, with the vividness of lightning; but then, Sir, it would as suddenly go off; and though I could not forget the impressions which it produced, yet I soon ceased to feel them." "You informed me just now," *Mr. Ingleby* remarked, "that while sometimes disgusted at your own pursuits, you often envied the superior felicity of our pious friends at the Villa; but why did you envy them their felicity, when you could form no just conception of the nature of it?" "It is true, Sir," Miss D. replied, "I could form no conception of the nature of their felicity, but I knew they were happy; more happy without our fantastic sources of amusement than we were with them. I never retired from their society without being convinced that there was a divine reality in personal religion, of which the majority have no more idea than I can form of the sublime felicities of a glorified spirit." "Yes, my dear," said the holy man of God, "there is a divine reality in personal religion, which I hope you will live to feel?" "I cannot live, Sir. I am not fit to die. My case is hopeless." "No, my dear, it is not hopeless. I can repeat to you words which have comforted thousands, and I hope they will

comfort you. John iii. 16. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" "But may I venture to rely on his death for eternal life, with a hope of attaining it?" "Yes, most certainly. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, those who *feel* they are sinners, and as soon as we *feel* our *guilt* and our *degeneracy*, we are not only fitted to come unto him for peace, and acceptance, and eternal glory, but *invited* in the most tender and endearing terms. Hence he says, Matt. xi. 28, *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*" "Oh," said Miss D. "these words comfort me, they lift up my soul as into the light of hope; and yet I am afraid to hope. Had I felt some years or even months since, what I now feel, I should have been preserved from the power of those fascinations, which have opened for me a premature grave; and might, in the serene and blissful society of my esteemed friends, Mrs. Stevens and Miss Roscoe, have enjoyed a large share of felicity on earth. "But," said Mr. Ingleby, "you ought to be thankful to the God of all consolation, that you have felt even in the eleventh hour, that degree of guilt, which has induced you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." "Very true, and I hope, Sir, ere you leave this house, you will try to impress on the mind of my dear honored parents, those important truths which you have exhibited with so much clearness to my mind." The good man knelt down and prayed with her, and then left her.

Immediately after Mr. Ingleby's departure, she retired to rest, and slept the greater part of the night. In the morning, when her father drew near her bed side, to inquire if her soul was happy, she replied, I am composed, father, but not happy. I shall leave you, but before I go, I have a few requests to make, which I hope you will comply with. The one is this, that you and my dear mother will go and hear that holy man preach, who has brought such words of comfort to my troubled soul. He understands what religion is, and will explain it to you more clearly, and more perfectly than our friend Mr. C. I once, in common with others, ridiculed his evangelical views of truth, and turned the keen edge

of my satire against those who seek felicity in the consolations of the gospel, rather than in the pleasures of the world; but now I am driven for peace and for hope to the same source. My other request is, that you will send my affectionate regards to Mrs. Stevens and Miss Roscoe, and say, that as I shall not be with you long, I wish to see them in the course of the day."

Mr. John Ryder, who had been unremitting in his attentions to her during her illness, and who was nearly frantic with grief in the prospect of parting with her for ever, was waiting below; and, when she was asked if he might see her once more, she replied, "I think not; it may disturb me; I am too near an eternal world, to suffer my feelings to intermingle again with those objects, on which they have been too strongly placed." But, after a long pause, she added, "yes, let him come up. The parting scene, though painful, may be profitable." He entered the room, pale and dejected; and though his spirit could brave death in the high places of destruction, yet now he was appalled on seeing her preparing for the tomb, whom he expected to have led to the altar of conjugal bliss. On approaching her bed-side, she extended her hand, and with a mild look and softened tone, she said, "We now part, but I hope not for ever. Death which is now taking me off, will soon call for you, and then I hope you will find that consolation in the death of a despised Saviour, which it hath pleased God, very unexpectedly and undeservedly to give me." She now drew back her hand, and concealed her face, as though her eyes were for ever closed on things visible and temporal.

The interview with her old friends Mrs. Stevens and Miss Roscoe, gave a fresh excitement to her feelings; but it was one of pure and unmingled satisfaction. They conversed together with reciprocal interest on the love of Christ, and the freeness of his salvation; but when any reference was made to the felicities of the heavenly state, Miss D. could do no more than express a hope, that she might be permitted to join the innumerable throng, though doomed to remain unnoticed amongst them. As Mrs. Denham and the nurse were exhausted by excessive fatigue, having had no rest for several nights, Mrs. Stevens's and Miss Roscoe's kind

offer to watch by her bed-side was accepted. It was evident to all that she could not continue long; for though there had been some intermitting symptoms of recruited strength, and regained vivacity, yet for the last few days the disease had made very rapid progress, and when the physician took his leave, he guarded them against being surprized if a sudden change should take place. She slept through the first part of the night very composedly, but about three in the morning she became restless, and on being raised up in the arms of Miss Roscoe, she swooned for a few seconds, when she gradually recovered, and expressed a wish to see her parents once more. She first kissed her mother and bid her adieu, and then her father, and then her two female friends, and, last of all, her old nurse; and after a long pause she said, "I am dying, but not without hope of attaining eternal life, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." She then gently reclined her head on the bosom of her friend Mrs. Stevens, and breathed her last.

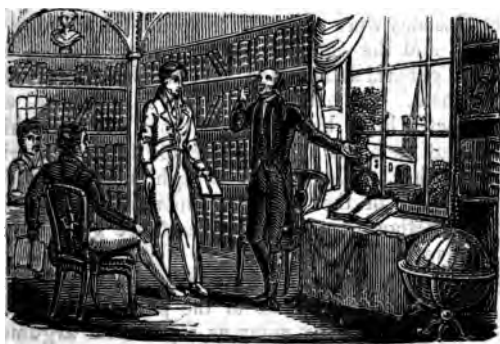
Thus died the once gay and thoughtless Miss D.; bearing a testimony to the vanities of that world which had ensnared her, and to the importance and excellence of that faith in Christ, which she had often made the theme of her ridicule and sometimes of her invective. Had she felt the transforming power of that truth, which on one occasion, she heard fall from the lips of the venerable Ingleby, she might still have been living, a comfort to her parents in their old age, an ornament to society, a blessing to the world, and at a distant period she might have descended to the grave, laden with the fruits of righteousness, and rich in the anticipation of faith; but as she chose to resist its impression, and devote herself to the follies and amusements of the age, she was called to taste the bitterness of death, in the spring time vivacity, and beauty of her years; and yet mercy spared her, till she sought the redemption of her soul, through faith in the death of the Redeemer; a privilege which is withheld from many who are permitted in the last hours of their mortal existence, to seek for enjoyments in the games of folly, and then plunge themselves into an eternal world, for which they have made no preparation.

[No. 43.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

DIVERSITY OF OPINION NO INSUPERABLE
BARRIER TO CHRISTIAN UNION.

PART I.



— “and now (rising from his seat as he spoke, his countenance at the same time glowing with all the ardour of impassioned feeling) it is with no common emotions of joy that I indulge the hope of leaving the church and the world at a period when the temple of war is closed, and our denominations are cultivating the spirit of universal peace. This is a gratification which has been denied to the great and the good of former times, and it is one which I did not anticipate a few years since.”

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1824.

DIVERSITY OF OPINION NO INSUPERABLE BARRIER TO CHRISTIAN UNION.

PART I.

"I therefore beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling."

Paul.

THE Roscoes were engaged to spend the evening at the Villa; and the venerable rector, whose sermon had given such general satisfaction, very cheerfully consented to meet them. He had long known Mr. Roscoe, and long respected him; but now he felt that affection which the different members of the household of faith cherish for each other. Our party, though small, included within it some of the different denominations of professing Christians; and this circumstance gave a turn to our conversation.

"The diversity of opinion which prevails amongst us," said *Mr. Ingleby*, "on some of the points of revealed truth, is often urged by many as a powerful argument against its divine origin. I recently received a letter from a gentleman whose mind had been perplexed on this subject, in which he says, 'When I look around me, and see the discordant sentiments which are held by different bodies of professing Christians; sentiments which are directly opposed to each other, and which admit of no adjustment; and when I recollect that they all profess to derive them from the same source, and are in the habit of appealing to the same authority in support of them,—I feel myself approaching a difficulty which I know not how to solve. What? is the Bible such a mysterious book that it is incapable of being understood? Is it the delusive oracle which utters truth and falsehood? If so, it cannot be a safe guide; and if it be not so, how do you account for the very dif-

ferent interpretation which is given to its meaning?" In reply, it was asked, if a different interpretation of a statute law was ever known to destroy its validity or authority? or if the different opinions which philosophers entertain on the primary cause of motion was ever known to disturb popular belief in the diurnal revolution of our earth? These questions were put, not to evade the difficulty which my friend proposed, but to remind him that a conflicting opinion did not of itself possess sufficient weight to set aside the force of any law, or destroy the truth of any proposition which came attested by its own proper evidences.

"It was observed also, that the very manner in which the truth is revealed in the Scriptures, by requiring a more patient and deliberate investigation than is usually given to it, admits of a great diversity of opinion on many of its subordinate points, even while there is a perfect conformity on those which may be regarded as its essential. It does not reveal the scheme of redemption in a compendious form; advancing first principles, and then proceeding to advance others, in a strict logical order, till the whole is completed; but employs history, narrative, parable, local customs, and the phenomena of nature, as the medium through which it conveys, in a detached manner, one doctrine, with its evidences—one precept, with its sanctions—one promise, with its securities—one privilege, with its obligations, at one time, and another at another; admitting, from its very plan, of a partial obscurity, and of seeming contradictions, amidst the splendour of its glory, and the amplitude of its harmony; and thus giving an incidental sanction to a difference of interpretation on our part, even while there is a latent continuity of truth preserved through the whole of its apparently unconnected communications."

Mr. Llewellyn. "And, Sir, facts and experience confirm the correctness of your statement. It is true, that there are many separate and distinct bodies of professing Christians, who are regarded by the ignorant and the bigoted as the abettors and disciples of very opposite religious creeds; but, if we inquire into the actual state of the case, we shall find that by far the greater part of them agree in all that they deem

essential, and vitally important in the Christian scheme, and differ only on what they regard as subordinate, and comparatively unimportant."

Mr. Roscoe. "But, Sir, do not the greater part of the dissenters in this kingdom reject the supreme divinity of Jesus Christ—the atonement which he made for sin—and the necessity of a supernatural influence to enlighten and renovate the mind? And if these doctrines are rejected as unimportant, what will you consider to be essential to Christianity?"

Mr. Llewellyn. "I readily grant, that where these doctrines are rejected all is rejected that may be considered as belonging *exclusively* to Christianity, but they are rejected by very few dissenters. The Socinians reject them; but they are neither a numerous nor a flourishing denomination amongst us; and though they have made, and still are making some efforts to force their meagre system of belief on public attention, yet it appears doomed to have only the select few for its advocates. The Pædobaptists, and the Baptists, the Arminian and Calvinistic Methodists, the Morevians, and the unostentatious Society of Friends, form the immense bulk of dissenters in this kingdom; and though they each imbibe some peculiarities of opinion which are exclusively their own, and which keep them in a state of amicable separation from each other, yet on those great and essential doctrines of revelation which you have enumerated they agree with the evangelical members of the Established Church."

Mr. Ingleby. "It was very much doubted, a few years since, if there was any spirit of union subsisting amongst even the spiritual members of the different denominations of professing Christians; but now we see them united together in harmony and peace."

Mr. Roscoe. "This union is a very gratifying and auspicious event; but would not the entire abolition of the distinctive denominations, and their union in one undivided body, be more conducive to the honour and prosperity of religion?"

Mr. Ingleby. "This I conceive to be impracticable during the partial obscurity of the present dispensation; and I must confess that I do not think it advisable. I have no objection to those divisions of opinion which

separate us into different and distinct denominations, though I deplore the spirit which they sometimes engender. I think that a variation in belief, on some of the minor questions of religion, preserves our attention awake and active—tends to keep the more important truths in a purer state; and the action and reaction of one Christian society on another, prevents that stagnation of feeling, and that inertness of principle, which an unbroken and undisturbed uniformity admits of.”

Mr. Roscoe. “But do you not think, Sir, that the visible church would assume a more imposing aspect, and display a more powerful agency, if she could unite all her members in one undivided body, under the immediate vigilance and authority of one Head, than she does now she is broken into so many disjointed parts?”

Mr. Ingleby. “Yes, Sir, if she could preserve her purity uncontaminated by evil; but we ought never to forget, that while the religion we profess is divine in its origin, and indestructible in its nature, it is human in its forms and in its administrations. Hence it alternately displays resistless power, and exhausted weakness—the sanctity and grandeur of its Author, along with the infirmities and imperfections of the agents to whom it is intrusted; sometimes exciting the profound veneration of the multitude, and at other times their contempt. And it is this admixture of what is human with what is divine, that renders it expedient that there should be some exposure to the influence of that reaction of distinctive opinions, and social attachments, which, by keeping us alive to the purity and extension of our separate communions, tends to promote the purity and extension of the faith which we hold in common.”

Mr. Stevens. “Your opinion, Sir, exactly accords with my own. Hence, instead of regarding the Established Church and the various denominations of orthodox dissenters as hostile foes, who are mutually aiming at each other’s humiliation and destruction, we should look on them as subjects of the same Monarch, bearing the respective insignia of their own order, yet reciprocally supporting each other without the formality of a visible contact, and advancing, as his wisdom directs, each in its own way, in reclaiming to a state of

allegiance the thousands and tens of thousands who have revolted from his authority."

Mr. Ingleby. "Or, to vary the figure, we may view them as so many servants belonging to the same Master, who are employed in cultivating the great moral vineyard, whose reward at last will be in proportion to their fidelity to him, and their affection for each other. If this comparison be just, which I have no doubt every good man will admit, I do not hesitate to say, that if we cherish a complacent feeling for those exclusively who belong to our own class, and attempt to lord it over our fellow-servants who may belong to another, or treat them with indifference or contempt, we dishonour ourselves, and offend against the law of our invisible Lord, who has commanded us to love each other as brethren."

Mr. Llewellyn. "When I consider the fallibility of the human mind—the prejudices of education—the influence of accidental reading and associations—and the extensive prevalence of erroneous opinions, instead of being astonished by the shades of difference which prevail amongst us, I am surprized that we think so nearly alike. We may, and we do agree on the substantial facts, and doctrines, and precepts of revelation, while we may, and we do differ on some of its established forms, and ceremonial enactments. But shall these trifling differences, which do not endanger the safety, nor add to the stability of our faith, which more frequently tarnish the lustre of the Christian character than increase its moral splendour, produce an alienation of Christian affection, as though we were avowed enemies? No. When this is the case we give a decisive proof that we do not possess the spirit of the Gospel; or if we possess it we do not display it, which aggravates rather than extenuates our crime."

Mr. Ingleby. "In the last prayer our Saviour uttered, before he presented himself as the expiatory sacrifice for human guilt, he earnestly entreated that all his disciples, in every future age, might be one, even as he and his Father were one; and he assigns the following reason,—*That the world may know that thou hast sent me.* 'For some ages,' to quote the language of an elegant writer, 'the object of that prayer was realized

in the harmony which prevailed amongst Christians, whose religion was a bond of union more strict and tender than the ties of consanguinity; and with the appellation of brethren they associated all the sentiments of endearment that relation implied. To see men of the most contrary characters and habits; the learned and the rude—the most polished, and the most uncultivated—the inhabitants of countries alienated from each other by institutions the most repugnant, and by contests the most violent, forgetting their ancient animosity, and blending into one mass, at the command of a person whom they had never seen, and who had ceased to be an inhabitant of this world, was an astonishing spectacle. Such a sudden assimilation of the most discordant materials, such love issuing from hearts the most selfish, and giving birth to a new race and progeny, could be ascribed to nothing but a divine interposition: it was an experimental proof of the commencement of that kingdom of God—that celestial economy, by which the powers of the future world are imparted to the present.”

Mr. Roscoe. “Yes, Sir, it must have been a spectacle no less delightful to the eye of the Christian than astonishing to the unbeliever; and had the visible church always exhibited such a spectacle of union and affection, she would have resembled, in the brightness of her glory, the angel of the Apocalypse, who was seen standing in the sun; and her history would have been the records of her spiritual triumphs rather than of her persecutions, and her miseries. But her bonds of union have been broken asunder, and her love of the brethren has been quenched in the bitter waters of strife. We are the descendants of the holy men who first caught, and first displayed the spirit of the Prince of Peace; but how little do we resemble them! We imbibe the same faith—plead the same promises—claim the same privileges—participate in the same spiritual enjoyments—bear the same distinctive and relative character—and anticipate the same high destiny; but we too often act as though we were released from the obligations which they admitted and discharged; and instead of attempting to prove to the world the truth of our Lord’s mission, and the moral efficacy of his

death, by our union, and our reciprocal affection, we strengthen them in their infidelity by our anti-christian spirit. Can no remedy be devised to correct the evil?"

Mr. Ingleby. "Why, Sir, I hope the evil is in some small degree corrected by the influence of our public institutions. Those who, a few years since, were envious and jealous of each other, now associate together on the most friendly terms. If the Bible Society has not terminated the contest, she has concluded a truce between us; and I flatter myself that there will be no renewal of hostilities, even though some of the more bigoted belonging to the different denominations should feel disposed to encourage them."

Mr. Llewellyn. "I often think that the place in which the Bible Society celebrates her returning anniversaries bears the nearest resemblance to the interior of that *house not made with hands* of any local habitation on earth. It is the mansion into which contention and strife dare not obtrude; where the sons of God disengage themselves from their distinctive attire, and appear in their more august and sacred vestments, strengthening that union, and cherishing that affection, which are the lovely presages of a more general harmony through the whole visible church. The celebrated Dr. Mason of New York says, in the preface to a work which he has lately published, 'Within a few years there has been a manifest relaxation of sectarian rigour among the different denominations in America; so that the spirit of the Gospel, in the culture of fraternal charity, has gained a visible and growing ascendancy. This happy alteration (he adds,) may be attributed, in a great degree, to the influence of Missionary and Bible Societies.' And is it not so in this kingdom? Till the Bible Society arose, and gained a settlement in our land, we had not an inch of neutral ground on which we could assemble, and unite with each other in any religious enterprise; but now we have the province of Goshen assigned us; and the air of that place is so salubrious—the light so clear and brilliant—the atmosphere so temperate and serene—and the harmony of its inhabitants so profound, that we venerate it as the mystic inclosure in which we have an emblematical representation of the celestial inheritance, in which the

pirits of the just live in closest union and sweetest concord. May the catholicism of grace and truth wax stronger and stronger, till Ephraim shall not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim; the strife of sect being overcome and banished by the all-subduing love of God our Saviour!"

Mr. Ingleby. "I have no doubt but the spirit which goes forth, from this and other kindred institutions, has a powerful, though imperceptible influence over the public mind, and we may calculate on its more effective and more extensive operations; but if we wish to accelerate its final triumph over the numerous prejudices and antipathies which still continue to exist amongst us, we must display the catholic temper of Christianity in our private intercourse, and endeavour to cultivate the most perfect charity towards all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. And ought we not to do it? Did not our Lord, when he prayed that we might all be one, as he and his Father were one, foresee the diversities of sentiment which would arise and prevail amongst his followers? and yet he was not deterred, by that consideration, from giving it utterance. If we cannot agree on every debateable point, yet we may live in peace; if we still choose to retain the distinctive insignia of our denomination, we need not cherish a spirit of jealousy or envy; but rather by walking in wisdom towards them who are without, and in brotherly kindness towards them who are within the pale of a public profession, convince all that the honour of the Christian character is dearer to us than the aggrandizement of a party, and that we are willing to merge all our minor differences in the expression of that love for each other which is the fulfilling of the law. If we could indulge a hope that every description of Christians would act upon these principles, we might then hail the dawn of a brighter day, and consider it as a nearer approach to the ultimate triumph of the church than the annals of time have yet recorded. In the accomplishment of our Saviour's prayer we should behold a demonstration of the divinity of his mission which the most impious could not resist; we should behold in the church a peaceful haven, inviting us to retire from the tossings and perils of this unquiet ocean to a sacred

inclosure, a sequestered spot, which the storms and tempests of the world were not permitted to invade."

Mr. Roscoe. "And what is it but prejudice, arising from ignorance and misconception, which prevents this cordial union and fraternal attachment? No one, I am conscious, who understands the genius of Christianity, or who has ever felt his bosom glow with supreme love to an unseen Redeemer, can for a single moment presume to recommend disunion amongst the members of the household of faith, though they may occupy different compartments, and commune at separate tables. It is prejudice that has kept me aloof from dissenters, and made me unwilling to associate with them, because I understood that the generality of them rejected the essential doctrines of Christianity; but now my error is corrected I can receive them as my brethren in Christ; and as I hope to meet them in heaven, and unite with them in the sublime exercises of that holy place, I shall feel a pleasure in mingling with them on earth."

Mr. Llewellyn. "And, Sir, you will permit me to say that you will find the same spirit animating the great body of pious dissenters in this kingdom. We have seceded from the church, but we do not wish to overthrow it; as we claim the right and privilege of thinking and deciding for ourselves, we do not wish to deprive you of it. We are a numerous and a united body; but we do not wish to be considered as a hostile band, watching an opportunity to rush in and divide the spoil. No; we wish to cultivate the graces of the Christian character while we contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; and though we may have our imperfections as a body, and as individuals, yet a disposition to revile or condemn our brethren of the Establishment is not one which is very common."

Mr. Ingleby. "I have for many years lived on terms of intimacy with many who do not belong to the church of which I am a member, and I have been sometimes censured for my conduct, but I have never repented of it. Some of the happiest moments of my life have been spent in social and spiritual intercourse with those of my Christian brethren who have differed from me on some of the subordinate points of religion. Our

conversation, when we have been together, has turned, not on those points on which we differed, but on those on which we were agreed; and I have often retired from these social interviews with my mind relieved from its cares—animated and enriched by the interchange of pious sentiment and feeling; and if the intervening distance between me and my Father's house has not been diminished, it has been irradiated with a more brilliant lustre. I am now tottering on that narrow isthmus of time which separates the visible and invisible world, and the small portion which I can redeem from the duties of my pastoral office I spend in reviewing the past, and anticipating the future. On throwing back my recollections over the history of more than half a century, I recal to my remembrance many imperfections which I deplore; but my conscience does not reproach me for cherishing a fraternal regard for my Christian brethren of other communions. In looking forward I anticipate many sources of enjoyment; and I candidly confess that I indulge a hope of partaking of much holy pleasure in associating with Luther, and Calvin, Howe, and Leighton, Whitfield, and Wesley, Doddridge, Watts, Fuller, and other illustrious men, of the same and other denominations, who have entered into rest. I attach very little importance to the influence of my example, as I occupy too insignificant a station in the church to operate any great or extensive change in the sentiments and feelings of others; but it is a source of satisfaction to me, in prospect of going to give an account of my stewardship, that my example has neither encouraged nor sanctioned discord amongst my Christian brethren. I have lived in stormy times, but I have never increased the fury of the tempest;—I have seen the spirit of party raging with desolating violence, and have known those who have borne the image of the heavenly stand in opposing columns to each other in the field of fierce and angry debate, but I have been enabled, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to hold on my way unconnected with their unhappy hostilities; and now (rising from his seat as he spoke, his countenance at the same time glowing with all the ardour of impassioned feeling,) it is with no common emotions of joy that I indulge the hope of leaving the

church and the world at a period when the temple of war is closed, and our denominations are cultivating the spirit of universal peace. This is a gratification which has been denied to the great and the good of former times, and it is one which I did not anticipate a few years since. The blessing which our Lord bequeathed to the church when she was first formed, but which for many ages the spirit of evil has alienated from her, is now diffusing itself far and wide; and I trust that it will in future remain the source of her bliss, as it will prove the means of her prosperity and honour. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.* John xiv. 27. The spirit of party, which is not yet become quite extinct amongst us, may threaten to disturb the growing harmony, and make many efforts to raise some insuperable barrier against the union of the people of God who are now scattered abroad amongst the different lots of our common inheritance; but as the improved temper of the times coincides with the dictates of Christian affection, we may justly calculate on a more copious measure of the influences of the Spirit poured down from on high, when we shall be convinced, by a force of evidence too powerful to be withstood, that *God is Love*, and that we never please him more than when we embrace with open arms, without distinction of sect or party, all who bear his image."

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[No. 44.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

DIVERSITY OF OPINION NO INSUPERABLE
BARRIER TO CHRISTIAN UNION.

PART II.



"Then, Sir, we should see the prejudices of the people, which now obstruct the progress of pure evangelical religion, giving way; and it would resemble, in its spirit, and in its effects, the angel of Bethesda, whose descent was not the signal of contention and strife, but the cause of that noiseless commotion, which led to the healing of the maimed and the diseased."

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1824.

DIVERSITY OF OPINION NO INSUPERABLE BARRIER TO CHRISTIAN UNION.

PART II.

"To see Christian societies regarding each other with the jealousies of rival empires, each aiming to raise itself on the ruin of all others—making extravagant boasts of superior purity, generally in exact proportion to their departures from it—and scarcely deigning to acknowledge the possibility of obtaining salvation out of their pale, is the odious and disgusting spectacle which modern Christianity presents. The bond of charity, which unites the genuine followers of Christ in distinction from the world, is dissolved, and the very terms by which it was wont to be denominated exclusively employed to express a predilection for a sect. The evils which result from this state of division are incalculable. It supplies infidels with their most plausible topics of invective—it hardens the conscience of the irreligious—weakens the hands of the good—impedes the efficacy of prayer—and is, probably, the principal obstruction to that ample effusion of the Spirit which is essential to the renovation of the world."

Hall.

"But," said *Mr. Roscoe*, on resuming the subject of discussion, "I do not perceive that an obligation to cherish the purest attachment for our Christian brethren of other denominations necessarily requires us to abandon our own, or that it tends to diminish the stronger predilection which we may feel towards it."

Mr. Ingleby. "Certainly not. We are to love the truth more than the agents of its administration, and the principles of religion more than the external forms which may prevail amongst us; but at the same time we are at perfect liberty to choose the ministry under which we prefer attending, and the specific denomination of Christians with which we may wish to stand connected. When we say that a pious Christian within the pale of the Establishment is under most sacred obligations to live in love and in peace with his brethren who are without, and that those without, are under the

same obligations towards those within, we do not mean to insinuate that, therefore, they are to separate themselves from their own communions, or cease to give them a decided preference. If the spirit of a comprehensive union were to cast the seed of alienation or discord into our respective societies, so as to threaten their individual dissolution, it would, in that case, want one of the evidences of being the peace maker, and the healer of the breach, which it now possesses. As a member of a family feels a stronger regard, and takes a deeper interest in its prosperity and felicity, than he is expected to cultivate towards the community at large, so is a member of a Christian society permitted to cherish a superior degree of affection for those of his brethren with whom he lives on more intimate terms of fellowship, and to manifest that superior degree of affection, by consecrating his time—his influence—his prayers, and his other talents, to promote their individual and collective prosperity and honour; even while he is required to cherish and display a kind, an amiable, and a benevolent disposition towards all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. And here we see the wisdom of the Redeemer, in grafting our obligation to the most intimate Christian fellowship on the very propensities of our nature, which incline us to live in social intercourse; guarding us, at the same time, from the danger of contracting a sectarian spirit, by enjoining on us the duty of doing good unto all men, especially those who belong to the household of faith."

Mr. Llewellyn. "It is to be lamented, Sir, that there are too many in every Christian society who do not keep pace, in liberality of sentiment and feeling, with the denomination to which they belong; and while they usually attract more notice than others, it is in consequence of the antiquity of their moral appearance; as an old baron, if he were to come forth in the costume of feudal times, would excite a much greater degree of public attention than any of our modern nobility. These professors retain the bigotry and intolerance of the 'olden time' of our church, when the right of private judgment on religion was denied; and though they do not recommend fines and imprisonments as expedients to enforce uniformity, yet they disdain to asso-

ciate with those who differ from them. Hence, if we go into our different denominations, and observe those who are most thoroughly imbued with the sectarian temper, we shall perceive so much intolerance and conceit—so much self-complacency and censoriousness—so much arrogance and disdain—and such swellings of pride, as the lips give utterance to their high and lofty assumption,—*The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we*,—that it will be impossible for us not to deprecate the spirit by which they are governed, and to turn away from the moral disfigurement of the Christian character which they exhibit, with a disgust no less entire than we may suppose Peter would feel, if requested to officiate in that corrupt church which professes to be founded by his authority. And if such professors, who usually stand out to public notice, are to be considered as correct specimens of the Christian character, ought we to be surprized if they bring religion into contempt?"

Mr. Ingleby. Certainly not, Sir. They do essential injury, not only to the honour of the denomination to which they belong, but to the cause of religion in general. As it is from the conduct of professors that infidels of every description form their opinion of the nature and the excellence of the Christian faith, they must necessarily conclude, that, that system of belief is essentially defective and corrupt, which tolerates and nourishes such obnoxious qualities; and to expect that they will give a patient attention to its evidences and its claims, while they see such living witnesses of its fatal tendency, would be visionary. Indeed, Sir, if we wish to make any deep and permanent impression on the men of the world; if we wish to silence their objections, and to convince them of the divine origin of the faith which we profess, we must retrace our steps, and correct our tempers; we must live in peace amongst ourselves; we must leave off contention; we must discover no disposition to injure or annoy each other; we must give ocular and unequivocal proofs that the questions on which we differ, are the subordinate tenets of revelation, which may be received or rejected without affecting its truth—disturbing its harmony—or impairing its strength; and, by a union of affection, and

concentration of our talents, we must advance in the beautiful developement of our moral virtues, remembering that the wisdom which guides us is *first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy*. When the pious members of the Establishment, and the various denominations of evangelical dissenters, are brought to merge their speculative and ceremonial differences in the cultivation and display of this fine, ethereal temper, the eulogium pronounced on the primitive disciples will be applied to us,—*See how these Christians love each other*. The novelty of the sight will command attention; and though I am fully persuaded that nothing but a supernatural power can renovate the human heart, yet such a display of united affection will, in the order of means, prove more effectual than the most stupendous miracles that ever were performed, by the prophets of the old dispensation, or the apostles of the new.”

Mr. Roscoe. “If it be true that our personal felicity bears a proportion to our moral conformity to the spirit and temper of Jesus Christ, it is evident that a liberal-minded Christian must partake of a much larger share of enjoyment, than one who lives under the influence and dominion of that sectarian bigotry, which keeps him in a state of alienation from his brethren of other communions.”

Mr. Stevens. “Most certainly, Sir; and by your permission I will give you a paragraph with which I was very forcibly struck when I first read it. The author is speaking of bigotry; and he says, ‘This sectarian and intolerant spirit can view no excellence out of its own pale, and deems every opinion heresy that does not bow to its authority. Its plans of doing good always betray the selfishness of their origin; and unable, from its very nature, to form designs commensurate with the grandeur of religion, and the necessities of the world, it not only refuses to co-operate with Christians of another party in promoting the well-being of society, and the advancement of religion, but contemplates with jealousy, and often with abhorrence, the noblest efforts of benevolence, when not performed under its exclusive auspices.’

‘Persons governed by such a spirit cannot view with complacency the separate divisions of the universal church, though there is nothing in their constitution that necessarily militates against the *unity of the spirit*, and the *bond of peace*. This unlovely bigotry narrows the range of the intellect—perverts and contracts the best affections—and, under its influence, even good men forget the charities of their renewed nature, and sometimes prostitute their talents to bear false witness against each other.’

‘To this bigotry, that religion, whose very essence is love, is directly opposed. Christians who imbibe the spirit of the New Testament, and who suffer that holy book to operate with full force upon their minds, are distinguished by a noble freedom from sectarian antipathies. They can say from the heart, *Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*. Without verging to the extreme of latitudinarian indifference, they can rejoice in the success of parties different from their own; and they do not complain because *devils are cast out by those who follow not with them*. Every man is a friend and a brother who consecrates his being to the glory of the Saviour, and every society a church in whose temple Jesus evidently records his name.’”

Mr. Ingleby. “There is a grandeur of sentiment, and a magic charm of feeling associated with the pure and heavenly spirit of the Gospel, which as far surpasses the highest attainments of sectarian bigotry, as the wisdom which the Supreme Being has displayed in the constitution and arrangements of nature, exceeds human skill. When animated by this spirit, the soul of the Christian expands its sympathies over the whole valley of misery and woe—includes, within the range of his active benevolence, men of every colour and every clime—identifies himself with the great philanthropists of the age, who live for no other purpose than to exterminate evil, and lessen the ills of suffering humanity by deeds of mercy, and by the dissemination of truth; while he feels an extacy of delight, when listening to the good news of civil and moral amelioration, whether it comes from a distant country, or a neighbouring hamlet, to which no mortal lips can give utterance.”

Mr. Roscoe. “Yes, Sir; I am conscious that a religi-

ous man, who possesses the pure spirit of his religion, is at once the most useful, and the most happy man.—As his felicity rises from sources more refined than those to which the men of the world have access ; his usefulness is of a more important, and more durable nature. I remember an observation which was once made on a mutual friend of our own, when she left a select society, to whom she had been communicating some benevolent scheme,—*When she visits us, she always leaves something behind that is worth thinking of, and worth talking about.*"

Mr. Ingleby. "Yes, Sir, as the pure spirit of the gospel is a liberal, so it is an active spirit. It does not wish to monopolize the felicities of religion, but to diffuse them ; and such is the intensity and ardour of its benevolence, that the meanest—the most abject child of sorrow—the poor outcast from the common sympathies of humanity—the forlorn object of woe, whom few men would pity, when no man could save, are the partakers of its bounties. The thoughtless and the gay—the sons of literature and of wealth—the votaries of fashion, and of dissipation, who pass away the tedious hours of their time, in partaking of enjoyments, which from some fatal cause, never yield substantial satisfaction, often look down on the disciples of Christ with contempt, censuring their want of taste, and wondering how it is, that they can derive any pleasure from the objects of their pursuit. Yes, they may wonder ; but we know that benevolence, *especially the benevolence of Christianity*, is a source of exquisite and permanent felicity."

Mr. Roscoe. "As the general well being of society is essentially benefitted by the active benevolence of Christianity, may we not, Sir, indulge a hope, that the prosperity of vital religion in our different communions would be promoted by the cultivation of that reciprocal affection, which is at once our duty and our honour?"

Mr. Ingleby. "There may be, I grant, external prosperity in our churches, even while the vital spirit of religion is languishing in the hearts of the people ; as the vine may send forth its luxuriant branches, and its thick and beautiful foliage, even when it yields no fruit. And perhaps the vital spirit of religion is exposed to more danger in the season of external prosperity, than in the season of external adversity. When the congregation is

large, and the spirit of unanimity and liberality is generally displayed—when the most cordial attachment subsists between the pastors and their flocks; and the lookers on are heard to exclaim, *they are of one heart and of one soul*, the people may be tempted to forget from whom these invaluable blessings proceed. But I never knew vital religion flourish amongst any people who were not united. The Spirit of the Holy One never comes to breathe on the dry bones of the slain, when the valley echoes with the neighing of the horses, and the rattling of the chariots of war. Oh no! Wars must be made to cease, the bow must be broken, and the spear cut in sunder; the chariots must be burnt in the fire; and the tranquillity of unruffled peace must reign over the whole scene, ere he descends to unite the disjointed parts, and animate the compacted body, with the incorruptible principle of spiritual life.

It is to His influence over the human mind, that we are to ascribe that portion of vital religion, which we possess; and though we have a sufficient force of evidence to convince us, that he still dwells amongst us, yet not in the plenitude of his power. *Occasionally* he descends in the ministry of reconciliation, and excites a commotion; and effects a moral transformation on the character of a large proportion of the people, as in the Islands of the Pacific Ocean; but in general he restricts the exercise of his power to a small number of our congregations, who are at distinct and distant intervals made alive from the dead. But as this is emphatically termed the dispensation of the Spirit; and as the high honour of glorifying Christ, in giving efficacy to the truth which he hath revealed and attested, is reserved for him; to what secondary cause shall we attribute his very partial communications, except to the offence which our discords, and alienation of attachment have given him? If he require peace and affection, in an individual society; as the precursors of his gracious visitations; does he not require the same amongst the separate divisions of his universal church?"

Mr. Llewellyn. "Most unquestionably, Sir, though the fact has not produced that deep impression on the public mind, which its importance demands. But, Sir, the *day of universal peace* now begins to dawn upon us; and

our union is receiving a fresh augmentation of strength, as time moves on in its course. The voice of prayer is more frequently, and more generally heard, for the out-pouring of his influence on the external means of grace, and already we see here and there, some verdant spots of spiritual beauty, and of life, amidst the surrounding desolations of evil, and of death; which attest the fact of his presence, and exhibit to us, as in miniature, the future state of the whole moral world; *when judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And when the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.* Isa. xxxii. 16, 17."

Mr. Roscoe. "The miraculous gifts, with which the Apostles were endowed, while they had to contend *against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in the high places*, of pagan idolatry, have long since ceased, with the exigency which called them forth; but as a favourite writer says, the renewing and sanctifying agency of the Spirit remains, and will continue to the end of time; the express declaration of our Saviour, not admitting of a doubt of its perpetuity. *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever,* John xiv. 16. And if, as we have reason to believe, his extraordinary out-pouring on our churches, will not take place till we are united in the bonds of peace; it behoves each individual Christian to cultivate the spirit of concord, with the utmost degree of vigilance and caution. To our prayers for His concurring testimony with the word of life, we must add a watchfulness over our own tempers, lest we should be involved in the singular charge of preventing the bestowment of the blessing which we solicit, by grieving the agent on whose will it depends."

Mr. Ingleby. "Your remarks, Sir, are just, and I wish they were deeply engraven on the heart of every Christian, by the Spirit of the living God; and then the ministration of righteousness, which is entrusted to us, would display a moral glory, which would surpass the brightest emanation of the Divine presence, which the annals of the church record. Then, Sir, we should see the prejudices of the people, which now obstruct the

progress of pure evangelical religion, giving way ; and it would resemble in its spirit, and in its effects, the angel of Bethesda, whose descent was not the signal of contention and strife, but the cause of that noiseless commotion, which led to the healing of the maimed and the diseased."

Mr. Llewellyn. "May we not suppose, Sir, that the general impression which is produced amongst the pious, of all denominations, of the absolute necessity of the out-pouring of the Spirit on the labours of Ministers at home, and of Missionaries in foreign parts, viewed in connection with the growing liberality and affection, which we cherish towards each other, is one of those spiritual signs, which indicate the bestowment of the blessing we so earnestly implore."

Mr. Ingleby. "I think we may. It is as the first droppings of that more copious effusion, which is to descend. The beginning of that most stupendous work, which he will perform, when the fulness of the time comes ; which will astonish no less by its extent, than by its purity ; and being of a moral and spiritual nature, will remain, after the subordinate agents of its production have entered into rest ; and the theatre of its exhibition has perished in the general conflagration. *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*" 2 Pet. iii. 13.

Mr. Llewellyn. "And as this union and affection will form one most powerful evidence of the truth of our Lord's mission ; and will at the same time, be a practical refutation of some of the charges, which have been brought against Christianity, as though it had an anti-social and disjointing tendency ; so it will exhibit the finest emblematical representation of the internal economy of the heavenly world, which can be given. *There is diversity of rank, but unity of esteem ; and though the various orders of beings, may occupy superior or subordinate stations under the government of the King Eternal ; yet no one is envious of another's elevation, or jealous of another's rivalry.*"

Mr. Ingleby. "There is one circumstance connected with our entrance into the heavenly world, which I think ought not to be overlooked. It is this. When we enter,

or when we are anticipating the solemnity of that great and most astonishing event, we place no dependance on our distinctive peculiarities; nor do we think of even adverting to them, except to express our regret, on account of the evil effects which they may have produced. At that period in the history of our being, the mind will be too deeply absorbed in the contemplation of its specific character and condition; will be too solemnly affected by the anticipation of its final destiny; and will feel too deeply abased, under a consciousness of its utter unworthiness of the divine favour, to dwell, even for a moment, on any other subject, than its redemption from all evil, and from all misery, by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. In comparison with this, every other subject, that has ever engrossed our attention, or interested our feelings, will vanish away, as things of naught; and after having, by one strong mental effort, disengaged ourselves from all association with the minor questions, which now agitate, and divide, and dishonour us, we shall be free to enter the joy of our Lord, as sinners redeemed by his blood, rather than as saints belonging to one denomination of Christians or another. Hence, if you go and visit a pious member of our establishment, when he is on the eve of leaving this scene of mortality, for the invisible world; or a pious member of any denomination of dissenters, you will find, that they breathe the same spirit, avow the same belief, derive consolation from the same source, and expire, giving utterance to the same joyful anticipations of mingling their grateful feelings together, in the same heavenly temple, where they hope to serve the Lord day and night, without having their harmony disturbed by one single discordant note."

Mr. Llewellyn. "And as we shall mingle together in heaven, I presume, Sir, we shall *know* each other *there*. Some pious Christians entertain doubts on this subject, but as it is one which has such a tendency to reconcile our minds to the departure of our friends, I cannot avoid cherishing it, with fond attachment."

Mr. Ingleby. "Yes, Sir, some good people have their doubts on the subject, but I wonder how they can entertain them. If such an idea received no support from the testimony of the scriptures, yet it is so congenial with the dictates of enlightened reason, and the

warm attachments of pure friendship, that I am at a loss to conceive how any one can reject it.

‘ Deep, deep the love we bear unto the dead !
Th’ adoring reverence that we humbly pay,
To one who is a spirit, still partakes
Of that affectionate tenderness, we own’d
Towards a being once, perhaps, as frail
And human as ourselves ;’

And what is it that moderates the violence of those pangs which death occasions ; and instinctively inclines us to anticipate, with some high degree of pleasure, the period of our own departure, but a hope that we shall again mingle our sympathies and affections ; and in each other’s society, partake of the refined enjoyment of a more intimate, and more permanent friendship ? And this idea, which is so gratifying to our feelings, is supported by the current language of the New Testament.

The Apostle, when writing to the Colossians, says, *That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.* By which, says Dr. Paley, I understand St. Paul to express his hope and prayer, that at the general judgment of the world, he might present the fruits of his ministry, perfect in every good work ; and if this be rightly interpreted, then it affords a manifest and necessary inference, that the saints in a future life, will meet and be known again to one another ; for how, without knowing again his converts in their new and glorified state, could St. Paul desire, or expect to present them at the last day ? The celebrated Baxter, says, and I think there is much force in the statement, ‘ I must confess as the experience of my own soul, that the expectation of loving my friends in heaven, principally kindles my love to them on earth. If I thought I should never know them, and consequently never love them after this life is ended, I should in reason, number them with temporal things, and love them as such ; but I now delightfully converse with my pious friends, in a firm persuasion that I shall converse with them for ever ; and I take comfort in those of them that are dead, or absent, as believing I shall shortly meet them in heaven, and love them with a heavenly love, that shall there be perfected.’ ”

[No. 45.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

THE STAGE COACH.



"We left the Villa at three o'clock, and reached the turnpike gate about a quarter of an hour before the mail came up. There was one outside passenger, and two inside, and having bidden adieu to our mutual friend Mr. Stevens, who had accompanied us thus far, we stepped in, heard the well known signal from the guard, *all's right*; and felt ourselves moving towards the imperial city."

Page 2.

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1824.

THE STAGE COACH.

"How often will one passenger mar the social fellowship of the rest, as we have known the harmony of the sweetest song broken by a single discord."
Anon.

My visit to the Villa had far exceeded the time I had originally intended to spend there; and though its local and social attractions still retained their captivating influence over me, yet I readily accepted an invitation from my esteemed friend, Mr. Llewellyn, to accompany him to London; where a new scene would open upon me. In sauntering through the woods and groves, and lanes and villages, which I had often frequented in my solitary walks, a morbid melancholy crept over me at the thought of parting, for though I anticipated some pleasure, from the prospect before me, yet not that "calm sunshine, nor heart-felt joy," which I had experienced in these retreats from the busy world. On reaching an eminence, where I had an entire command of the whole country, the lines of Cowper recurred to my recollection; nor could I withhold the tributary tear of regret, as I descended from the enchanting spot.

"Scenes must be beautiful, which daily viewed,
Please daily, and whose novelty survives
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years."

We left the Villa at three o'clock, and reached the turnpike gate, about a quarter of an hour before the mail came up. There was one outside passenger, and two inside, and having bidden adieu to our mutual friend Mr. Stevens, who had accompanied us thus far, we stepped in, heard the well known signal from the guard, *all's right*; and felt ourselves moving towards the imperial city. Though I have not devoted so much time to the study of physiognomy, as the celebrated Lavater; and have often on a more intimate acquaintance with another, been compelled to revise the opinion which I had formed at first sight; yet on this occasion, as on most others, I began to examine the features, and the forms, and the manners of the two strangers who sat opposite me. The one was a Friend who had long since passed the meridian of life, still retaining the neat costume of his order, with a fine roman nose, keen blue eyes, rather deeply set; and a countenance, whose expression of intelligence and benignity.

strongly prepossessed me in his favour. But had his general appearance been less attractive, I should have felt a profound respect; as I once had a mother who spoke the plain language, and taught me to speak it in my younger days; and though in riper years, I left the denomination of my youth, yet I still revere that interesting society of professing Christians.

The other was a lusty gentleman, about the age of fifty, but there was no feature in his face, which gave me pleasure.

We rode on in silence, till we came to D—s, where we changed horses; and while we were waiting for the guard, who was detained at the post office, we amused ourselves in looking at a group of boys who were playing at trap ball, in the market place. The gentleman, (whom I shall call *Mr. Sykes*) said, pointing to the boys, "There is perfect happiness." As no one offered to make any reply to this sage remark: *Mr. Llewellyn* observed, "Perhaps Sir, their happiness is not perfect. In the midst of their gambols, and while feeling elated with the high honour of winning the game, the sudden recollection of a lesson yet unlearned, that must be said to-morrow, may perchance give them a pang." This very natural remark, expressed in the most good natured manner, gave offence; and gathering himself up into that attitude of defiance, which appeared most natural to him, he said, "And pray, Sir, do you not suppose that the happiness of childhood is the most perfect happiness which mortals enjoy?" "It ought not to be, Sir," said *Mr. Llewellyn* in a very modest tone. "Ought not to be, Sir!" *Mr. Sykes* replied, with some degree of sarcastic warmth; "Then Sir, how must you have spent those days of innocent mirth, not to be able to look back on them with envy?" This sarcastic throw, roused up the spirit of my friend, who though mild, was not disposed to be run down by insolence unprovoked; and he said in a tone, somewhat elevated, "Then I presume Sir, you look back to the days of your childhood, and sigh over joys departed, never to return; but you will permit me to ask, how have you spent the years of manhood, not to be yet in possession of more noble, of more refined, of more exalted felicity, than you partook of when you were flying a kite, or spinning a top? If

you think, Sir, that I misimproved my boyish days, by not acquiring that perfection of happiness, which they generally bring, you force me to conclude that you have misimproved the years of manhood, if in the decline of life, you are compelled to look back to your childish days, as the most happy you have ever known."

As Mr. Sykes, perceived from the smartness of this reply, that he stood no chance to carry his point, without a strong reinforcement, he turned round, and appealed to the Friend, who did not appear to take any interest in the question. "Why truly," said the Friend, "I think with my neighbour opposite, that if thou wert more happy when a boy, than thou art now, thou canst not have improved thy time, as thou oughtest to have done." "Well," said *Mr. Sykes*, "as this is the first company in which I have ever heard the question disputed, I suppose I am along with a class of human beings of a new order." "Perhaps thou art," rejoined the Friend, "and at any rate thou must confess, that this new order of human beings, as thou art pleased to term us, excel all thy former associates in one very important point." "In what point, Sir," *Mr. Sykes* asked, in his native tone. "Why in this,—while thou and thy friends have outlived your happiest days, we are now enjoying ours. Hence, while it is to our advantage to live in a state of manhood, it would have been yours, to have continued in a state of childhood."

This remark re-established the reign of silence which continued undisturbed, till some children ran out from a few miserable looking huts, which stood near the road side, and followed the coach some considerable distance; attempting to excite our generosity, by their piteous moans, and wanton antics. "There, Sir," said *Mr. Sykes*, "If you look out, you will see the picture of perfect happiness." Our sagacious Friend, who appeared to have high purposes revolving in his breast, when disengaged from conversation, was rather startled by this observation, as he had not seen the group of juvenile beggars, by which we were annoyed; but on looking out, as requested, he shrewdly replied, "I was not aware that perfect happiness was reduced so low in life, as to become a common beggar." "Poverty, Sir," said *Mr. Sykes*, "is no disgrace, and poor people are happy, as well as

rich." "Very true," replied the Friend; "but it is a disgrace to any parents, to train up their children to the practice of begging. These children certainly look healthy and sprightly, but if thou wert to be present when they return from an unsuccessful race, thou wouldst see a picture of perfect sorrow." "Well," said Mr. Sykes, they shall have one happy day, and immediately tossed out a few halfpence." "Now," said the Friend, "if thou wilt look, probably thou wilt see a violent contention between them; some crying because unable to get the prize, and some fighting over the division of the spoil." "I suppose, Sir," Mr. Sykes remarked sarcastically, "no one ever fought over any of your scattered gifts." "I never saw any," the Friend replied, "as I am not in the habit of scattering my gifts, with an indiscriminate hand; nor do I approve of those acts, misnamed charitable, which have an evil tendency." "But, Sir," said Mr. Sykes, "what evil can result from giving a few pence to a few poor miserable looking boys and girls." "Why," replied the Friend, "thou hast seen one evil in the contention which immediately ensued, but this is not the least; these children who are initiated at such an early period of life into the begging system, are taught the art of deception; they are thrown off from the resources of industry and frugality, on the precarious supplies of charity; and if from the influence of vagrancy, they are not led to thieving, they will never feel any reluctance to receive support from the parish rate. Charity is a virtue which we all admire, and which we ought to cultivate; but I have long thought, that where *discretion does not administer its bounties*, society sustains more moral injury, than it derives advantages." "Discretion! O yes, discretion!" said Mr. Sykes, "is the chief virtue, with Sir John Falstaff it is the better part of valour, with you of charity; but in my opinion it is more frequently an apology for cowardice, or for covetousness."

We soon after parted with Mr. S. when our sage Friend addressing himself to Mr. Llewellyn, said, "I have no doubt, but the passenger who has just left us, has some excellencies, but he does not excel in the art of rendering himself agreeable; an art which few learn, and fewer practice; but it is one of so much importance, that it

———"gives the flower
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,
And we are weeds without it."

His place in the coach was soon occupied by a young man, who was going to enjoy the sports of the field, with a party which he expected to meet at his friend's, who resided near M——. He was very loquacious, but his conversation turned principally on horses, and dogs, and game, and the various qualifications of a good shot. Mr. Llewellyn made several efforts to introduce other topics, but he could not succeed, as no canine animal ever stood truer to his bird, than he did to his favourite theme. He told us of his hair breadth escapes, of the fatigues which he had endured, and the feats which he had achieved; with as much glee, as the huntsman throws off at a chase; and dwelt with peculiar delight on his good fortune the preceding day, when out of twenty-five who started, he was the only one *in at the death*, and exhibited the *brush*, as the proud memorial of his honour. After he had told, and re-told his tales, which gave no one pleasure but himself; he fell into a dead silence, which we all hailed with delight, as we had other and graver subjects to engross our attention. At length turning himself to the Friend who sat by his side, and whose patriarchal simplicity appeared to amuse him, he said, with an air of low satire, "I believe, Sir, your sect are not much given to such sports." "Why no," replied the Friend, "we have too much humanity, to attempt to extract pleasure from the sports which torture others." "I have read," said the sportsman, "all your objections; but Sir, they have no point, they don't hit the mark, nature points to game, and we are to follow. I love the sound of the horn, more than the silence of meditation." "I have no doubt," said the Friend, "but thou dost, but thou shouldst remember, that some prefer silence to noise." "I take you, Sir, you intend to say, that you would rather have silence, than my conversation." "I have no objection," the Friend replied, "to conversation, when it is interesting or profitable, but thou must be aware, that the present company, take no interest in the detail of thy field achievements." "Well, Sir," said the sportsman, "I have no objection to turn the conversation to graver subjects; and as I am a young man, just beginning to turn my attention

to religion, you will permit me to ask you one question, which puzzles me. It is this, Sir: As we have so many religions in this kingdom, which is the best?" "Why," said the Friend, "that which makes the simple wise, and teaches young men to cultivate the grace of modesty." "Very smart, Sir; then you think such a religion would do me good?" "I think it would."

When the sportsman left us, his place was immediately occupied by a gentleman who had lately returned to England, after an absence of five years. He was an interesting and intelligent looking man; and I flattered myself from his general appearance, that we should have agreeable society, during the rest of our journey. Nor was I disappointed. He was rather reserved at first, but after we had been engaged in a desultory conversation for some time, he fell in with us, and willingly contributed his share. There is a strong propensity in some minds to sacrifice truth, when engaged in the narrative, or descriptive. They will not utter direct and palpable falsehood, but they are so accustomed to exaggeration and high colouring, that a man who respects his own reputation, will never presume to speak after them. The design which they have in view, is to produce *effect*, and hence, they often leave the beaten path of sober truth, to amuse or astonish their hearers, with the fanciful, or the marvellous. But our companion appeared to have escaped from the contagion of this moral disorder, which is prevalent amongst his fraternity; as he gave us no description of persons, of places, or of things, which staggered our faith. He had sailed on the boisterous sea, without having just escaped the horrors of a shipwreck; he had pass'd through woods, without having had to contend with the assassin; he had resided in crowded cities, and thinly inhabited villages, where he met with no rude insults from the vulgar, or flattering attentions from the great. He had travelled through the greater part of the continent of Europe, had visited the East and West Indies, and had spent the last two years in America: but intended to fix his final abode in his native country, where he said he hoped to rest in the same grave with his fathers. "You have seen, Sir," I remarked, "a great part of the world, but as you intend to fix your final residence in old England, I take for granted, that you have not discovered any

country which rivals her in your estimation." "No, Sir," he replied, "I have not. I love England—I love her changing seasons, and her fruitful soil—her fine national character—her political constitution, and that love of liberty, both civil and religious, which she cherishes and which she diffuses—I love every thing that is English; and I condemn the Briton who is not enthusiastic in the praise of his country." "The love of liberty," I remarked, "is a passion which gives a beauty, and a powerful energy to our national character; but you must confess, Sir, that this passion is not exclusively ours. America cherishes it with an equal degree of ardour." "Yes, Sir," he replied, "she does, but her love of liberty is a selfish passion. She has fought for her own freedom, and she has won the laurels, but she knows how to enslave others. When the foot of a poor captive touches the soil of Britain, his chains burst from around him; his life is taken under the protection of the law, no one can insult him with impunity, he is as safe in his hut, as the lordly Baron is within the walls of his castle. But, in the United States of America, there are upwards of a million of human beings, now living in a state of slavery, bought and sold like our cattle; subjected to the torturous cruelty of men, in whose bosom every atom of humanity has long since been annihilated; with no hope of ever breathing the vital air of liberty. What, Sir, is freedom, where all are not free, where the greatest of God's blessings is limited with impious caprice, to the colour of the body? Having bled at every pore, rather than submit to wear the yoke of a foreign authority; why does she not, now she has recovered herself from her state of exhaustion, and is in the possession of her unalienable right, act a just and generous part towards her black population, and grant them that liberty, which it is no less unjust, than it is cruel to withhold? She is worse than the chief butler of Pharaoh, who, when he had gained his freedom merely forgot his fellow prisoner. She remembers hers, but it is to rivet the chains of perpetual bondage still closer upon them. She may vaunt herself on the love of liberty, and on her rising greatness in the scale of nations; but as long as the groans of a million human beings howl around her Congress, without moving its pity, or its commiseration, she will have a badge of infamy affixed to her

national character, from which no virtues will ever redeem her." "I am happy," I observed, "to hear such noble sentiments fall from your lips; and I doubt not but you feel equally indignant against slavery, wherever it is practised." "Yes, Sir," he replied, "I do; and hence, I could not remain in the West Indies with any comfort, where I saw it in all its horrid deformity. We did a good deed, when we abolished the slave trade; but, Sir, we shall never complete the work of righteousness, till we have abolished slavery. A state of slavery is no less repugnant to the principles of our Constitution, than it is to the genius of the Christian religion; and though it may continue to exist for a few years longer, as a foul blemish on our national character, yet, Sir, there is too much honour and too much humanity amongst us, to allow it to remain for ever. The people of England are against it; they regard it as an atrocious crime, offensive to God, unjust to man; and I have no doubt, but they will raise a voice in its condemnation, which their wise and powerful legislators will be proud to echo, till after some lengthened debate, the large majority will arise, and with a mighty swell of virtuous feeling, decide that Britain will have no slaves."

The personal testimony of this gentleman confirmed the written statements of the present state of slavery in our West India colonies, which have lately issued from the press; and he related several instances of barbarous treatment which he witnessed, too revolting to the feelings of humanity to be heard without shuddering. We exchanged cards on taking leave of each other, at the Swan-with-two-necks; and in some future number, I may give the substance of our conversation and debates at the different interviews, which we mutually enjoyed.

As the state of slavery is now engaging so much of the public attention, and those, who feel the influence of religious truth on their hearts, are so anxious for its abolition, I think I cannot do a more essential service to the poor unhappy negroes, than by giving circulation to a few well attested facts, which will operate more powerfully in their favour, than the most cogent arguments which can be employed.

"A man died on board a merchant ship, apparently in consequence of poison being mixed with the dinner served

up to the ship's company. The cabin boy and cook were suspected, because they were, from their occupations, the only persons on board who did not partake of the mess; the effects of which began to appear as soon as it was tasted. As the offence was committed on the high seas, the cook, though a Negro, became entitled to the benefit of a jury, and, with the cabin boy, was put on his trial. The boy, a fine looking lad, and wholly unabashed by his situation, was readily acquitted. The Negro's turn was next. He was a man of low stature, ill shapen, and with a countenance singularly disgusting. The proofs against him were, first, that he was cook; so, who else could have poisoned the mess? It was indeed overlooked, that two of the crew had absconded, since the ship had come into port. Secondly, he had been heard to utter expressions of ill-humour, before he went on board: that part of the evidence indeed was suppressed, which went to explain these expressions. The real proof, however, was written in his skin, and in the uncouth lines of his countenance. He was found guilty."

"Mr. Crafts, jun. a gentleman of the Charleston bar, who, from motives of humanity, had undertaken his defence, did not think a man ought to die for his colour; albeit it was the custom of the country; and moved in consequence for a new trial, on the ground of partial and insufficient evidence; but the Judge, who had urged his condemnation with a vindictive earnestness, intrenched himself in forms, and found the law gave him no power in favour of mercy. He then forwarded a representation of the case to the President, through one of the senators of state; but the senator ridiculed the idea of interesting himself for the life of a Negro, who was therefore left to his cell and the hangman. In this situation he did not, however, forsake himself; and it was now, when prejudice and persecution had spent their last arrow on him, that he seemed to put on his proper nature, to vindicate not only his innocence, but the moral equality of his race, and those mental energies which the white man's pride would deny to the shape of his head and the woolliness of his hair. Maintaining the most undeviating tranquillity, he conversed with ease and cheerfulness, whenever his benevolent counsel, who continued his kind attentions to the last, visited his cell. I was present on one of these occasions,

and observed his tone and manner, neither sullen nor desperate, but quiet and resigned, suggesting whatever occurred to him on the circumstances of his own case, with as much calmness as if he had been uninterested in the event: yet, as if he deemed it a duty to omit none of the means placed within his reach for vindicating his innocence. He had constantly attended the exhortations of a methodist preacher, who, for conscience' sake, visited those who were in prison; and having thus strengthened his spirit with religion, on the morning of his execution breakfasted as usual, heartily; but before he was led out, he requested permission to address a few words of advice to the companions of his captivity. "I have observed much in them," he added, "which requires to be amended, and the advice of a man in my situation may be respected." A circle was accordingly formed in his cell, in the midst of which he seated himself, and addressed them at some length, with a sober and collected earnestness of manner, on the profligacy which he had noted in their behaviour, while they had been fellow-prisoners; recommending to them the rules of conduct prescribed by that religion in which he now found his support and consolation. "Certainly, if we regard the quality and condition of the actors only, there is an infinite distance betwixt this scene and the parting of Socrates with his disciples; should we however, put away from our thoughts such differences as are merely accidental, and seize that point of coincidence which is most interesting and important; namely, the triumph of mental energy over the most clinging weaknesses of our nature, the Negro will not appear wholly unworthy of a comparison with the sage of Athens. The latter occupied an exalted station in the public eye, though persecuted even unto death and ignominy by a band of triumphant despots; he was surrounded in his last moments by his faithful friends and disciples, to whose talents and affection, he might safely trust the vindication of his fame, and the unsullied whiteness of his memory; he knew that his hour of glory must come, and that it would not pass away. The Negro had none of these aids, he was a man friendless and despised; the sympathies of society were locked up against him; he was to atone for an odious crime, by an ignominious death; the consciousness of his innocence was confined to his own bosom, there probably

to sleep for ever ; to the rest of mankind he was a wretched criminal ; an object perhaps of contempt and detestation, even to the guilty companions of his prison-house ; he had no philosophy with which to reason down those natural misgivings, which may be supposed to precede the violent dissolution of life and body ; he could make no appeal to posterity, to reverse an unjust judgment. To have borne all this patiently would have been much ; he bore it heroically.

"Having ended his discourse, he was conducted to the scaffold, where having calmly surveyed the crowds collected to witness his fate, he requested leave to address them. Having obtained permission, he stepped firmly to the edge of the scaffold, and having commanded silence by his gesture, "You are come," said he, "to be spectators of my sufferings ; you are mistaken, there is not a person in this crowd, but suffers more than I do. I am cheerful and contented, for I am innocent." He then observed, "that he truly forgave all those who had taken any part in his condemnation, and believed that they had acted conscientiously, from the evidence before them ; and disclaimed all idea of imputing guilt to any one." He then turned to his counsel, who, with feelings which honoured humanity, had attended him to the scaffold : "To you, Sir," said he, "I am indeed most grateful, had you been my son, you could not have acted by me more kindly ;" and observing his tears, he continued, "This, Sir, distresses me beyond any thing I have felt yet ; I entreat you will feel no distress on my account ; I am happy." Then praying to Heaven to reward his benevolence, he took leave of him, and signified his readiness to die ; but requested he might be excused from having his eyes and hands bandaged, wishing, with an excusable pride, to give this final proof of his unshaken firmness ; and died without the quivering of a muscle.

"The spectators, who had been drawn together, partly by idle curiosity, and partly by a detestation of his supposed crime, retired with tears for his fate, and execrations on his murderers."

HALL, pp. 433—438.

I might fairly challenge the writers of romance to rival this story in depth of interest. I should only weaken its effect by any comments of my own.

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

A SABBATH IN LONDON.



"It was a fine morning, though rather cold; the tide was running in at its usual rate; many were gazing on them, like myself, when a naval officer standing near me called to them through the ballustrades, and said, "a pleasant voyage to you."

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A SABBATH IN LONDON.

"In the Metropolis, instead of that solemn stillness of the vacant streets in the hours of the public service which might suit, as in former days, with the sanctity of the day, and be a reproof to every one who should stir abroad but upon the business of devotion, the mingled racket of worldly business and pleasure is going on with little abatement; and in the churches and chapels which adjoin the public streets, the sharp rattle of the whirling phaeton, and the graver rumble of the loaded waggon, mixed with the oaths and imprecations of the brawling drivers, disturb the congregation, and stun the voice of the preacher."

Bishop Horsley.

THE institution of the Christian ministry is one of the most salutary provisions that was ever made to promote the improvement and happiness of man. If we suppose, with the enemies of Christianity, that it is of human origin, and that its functions are discharged by human agents, who are actuated and governed by the selfish or ambitious passions of our nature, still it will occupy, in the estimation of every wise man, a high station, as a powerful ally to the cause of patriotism and of virtue. It enjoins on the various ranks and orders of society submission to Cæsar, and reverence for God, and lays down, with the utmost degree of precision, the relative duties which we are to discharge towards each other; while the veneration in which it is generally held in this kingdom is favourable to its influence. To say that every one is strictly virtuous who listens to its maxims of wisdom, would be to advance an assertion which facts would contradict; but if we judge from the present state of society, we shall be compelled to admit that there is a larger portion of virtue amongst those who attend it, than amongst those who treat it with neglect and scorn. Hence its abolition would be a national evil, as disastrous to its moral improvement and felicity, as the triumphs of political anarchy would be to the well balanced constitution of the British empire.

But even this institution, which is so calculated to promote the moral improvement and happiness of man,

would prove comparatively useless, if it were not for the appointment of the Sabbath; for such is the ascendancy which the cares—the pleasures—the fascinations—and the duties of this world have acquired over the public mind, that very few would have an opportunity to attend it, if some specific portion of time were not set apart for this express purpose. If the husbandman were compelled to toil in the field, and the mechanic to labour in the shop; if the tradesman, the merchant, and the other members of the community had to attend to their respective duties without any intermission, except what caprice or indolence dictated, the minister of mercy might go into the temple, and proclaim all the words which relate to the life to come; but would he be surrounded by a large and an attentive audience? Oh no. The temple would be forsaken, as though it were the mausoleum of death, unless, as when our Lord was on earth, it should be converted into a house of merchandize; and the powers of *this* world would so engross the attention of men, that those of the next, would be generally, if not universally disregarded. To prevent this fatal evil, one day in seven is set apart, by the immediate authority of God, which we are commanded to devote to the exercises of private and public worship; but alas! how many treat this sacred injunction with contempt.* Some in the higher ranks of life, who dis-

* The author cannot but deplore the custom which prevails amongst some of our nobility, and of our statesmen, who have their routes and parties on the sabbath day; and though he is not vain enough to suppose that they will condescend to peruse the humble productions of his pen, yet he is anxious to guard his readers against the contaminating influence of their pernicious example. No one feels more respect for rank, than he does, but then he wishes to see rank act with dignity; he wishes to see those who are exalted above others, taking the lead, in the path of virtue and religion; but if they dare treat with contempt the authority of God, by devoting His sabbaths for purposes of amusement, or convivial feasting; and by their habits of dissipation, corrupt and demoralize the inferior classes of society, he does not hesitate to say, that they are a moral curse to the country; and though their elevation raises them above the reach of human censure, yet they stand responsible to God, for all the injury which they do to the principles and the tastes of others. But as we are prone to imitate the conduct of our superiors, it behoves us to be on our guard, lest we imitate that part of their conduct, which our judgment con-

dain to be thought religious, employ it as a day for travelling, or for feasting; and multitudes of the inferior classes regard it as a day either of convenience, of pleasure, or of dissipation.

As I was walking down Bridge Street, on my way to Surrey Chapel, I saw a party of young people on before me, whose volatile manners ill accorded with the sanctity of the day; and just as I was passing them I heard one say, "Indeed I think we shall do wrong—my conscience condemns me—I must return." "There can be no harm," replied another, "in taking an excursion on the water; especially as we have resolved to go to chapel in the evening." "I must return," rejoined a female voice, "my conscience condemns me. What will father say if he hear of it?" By this time they had reached the bridge; and one of the party was busily engaged with a waterman, while the rest stood in close debate for the space of five minutes, when they all moved forward towards the water.

I watched them going down the stairs, and thought I perceived an air of peculiar melancholy in the countenance of the female who had objected to the excursion, but whose firmness gave way to the ardour of importunity. Two of the gentlemen stepped into the boat; two more stood at the water's edge, and the females were handed in one after another; but still I could perceive great reluctance on the part of the one who had previously objected; till at length, being surrounded by all the gentlemen of the party, she yielded, and the boat was pushed off. It was a fine morning, though rather cold; the tide was running in at its usual rate; many were gazing on them, like myself, when a naval officer standing near me called to them through the balustrades, and said, "A pleasant voyage to you." One of the gentlemen suddenly arose to return the compliment; but from some cause, which I could not perceive, he unfortunately fell over into the water. This disaster threw

demonstrates, as we shall not be permitted to adduce, at the day of judgment, the sinful practices of others, as an excuse for our own crimes. If we are then found guilty, and have not Jesus Christ, the righteous, to plead our cause with the Father, we shall be condemned, though we may be able to trace up our sins, to the examples which have been set us.

the whole party into the utmost consternation; and each one, instead of retaining his seat, rushed to the side of the boat over which their companion had fallen, which upset it, and all were instantaneously plunged into the deep. The shriek which the multitude of spectators gave, when they beheld this calamity, exceeded any noise I had ever heard; several females fainted; boats immediately put off; and in a few minutes I had the gratification of seeing the watermen rescuing one—and another—and another from a premature grave. Having picked up all that they could find, the different boats were rowed to shore, where some medical gentlemen were in waiting; but when the party met together, no language can describe the horror which was depicted on every countenance when they found that two were still missing. "Where's my sister?" said the voice which had said, only a few minutes before, "There can be no harm in taking an excursion on the water; especially as we have resolved to go to chapel in the evening." "Where's my Charles?" said a female, who had appeared the most gay and sprightly when I first saw them.

At length two boats, which had gone a considerable distance up the river, were seen returning; and on being asked if they had picked up any one, they replied, "Yes—two." This reply electrified the whole party; they embraced each other with the tenderest emotions; they wept for joy, and so did many others who stood around them. "Here's a gentleman," said the waterman, as he was coming up to the foot of the stairs, "but I believe he's dead." "Where's the lady?" said her brother, "Is she safe?" "She is in the other boat, Sir!" "Is she alive?—Has she spoken?" "No, Sir, she has not spoken, I believe." "Is she dead? Oh tell me!" "I fear she is, Sir."

The bodies were immediately removed from the boats to a house in the vicinity, and every effort was employed to restore animation, and some faint hopes were entertained by the medical gentlemen that they should succeed. In the space of little more than ten minutes they announced the joyful news that the gentleman began to breathe, but they made no allusion to the lady. Her brother sat motionless, absorbed in the deepest melan-

choly, till the actual decease of his sister was announced when he started up, and became almost frantic with grief; and though his companions tried to comfort him, yet he refused to hear the words of consolation. "Oh my sister! my sister! would to God I had died for thee!" They were all overwhelmed in trouble and knew not what to do. "Who will bear the heavy tidings to our father?" said the brother, who paced backwards and forwards the room, like a maniac broke loose from the cell of misery,—“Oh who will bear the heavy tidings to our father?” He paused—a death-like silence pervaded the whole apartment—he again burst forth in the agonies of despair,—“I forced her to go, against the dictates of her conscience—I am her murderer—I ought to have perished, and not my sister. Who will bear the heavy tidings to our father?” “I will,” said a gentleman who had been unremitting in his attentions to the sufferers. “Do you know him, Sir?” “Yes, I know him.” “Oh, how can I ever appear in his presence? I enticed the best of children to an act of disobedience, which has destroyed her!”

How the old man received the intelligence, or what moral effect resulted from the disaster, I never heard; but it may furnish me with a few reflections, which I wish to press upon the attention of my readers. As the Sabbath is instituted for the purpose of promoting your moral improvement and felicity, never devote its sacred hours to the recreations of pleasure. He who has commanded you to keep it holy, will not suffer you to profane it with impunity. He may not bring down upon you the awful expressions of his displeasure while you are in the act of setting at open defiance his authority, but there is a day approaching when you must stand before him. And can you anticipate the solemnities of that day, while going on in a course of sin, but with the most fearful apprehensions? You may, like many others, suppose that, that day is very far off; but you may be undeceived by a sudden visitation of providence, and in a moment be removed from amongst your gay companions to appear in his presence. If you should, with what terror-struck amazement will you look on the awful scene around you!—with what agonizing despair will you listen to the final sentence,—*Depart.*

Resist the first temptation to evil, or your ruin may be the inevitable consequence. "Indeed I think we shall do wrong:—my conscience condemns me—it must return," said the unfortunate female, when she got near the edge of the water; but, having yielded to the first temptation, she was induced to overcome all her scruples, and within the space of half an hour from that time she entered the eternal world. Had she refused when her brother solicited her to leave her father's house, she had still lived to bless him and comfort him in his old age; but by complying she lost her strength to withstand temptation—and then her life. What a warning! And is this the only one which the history of crime has given you? Alas, no! Have not many, who have ended their days on the platform of death, traced up their ruin to their profanation of the Sabbath? This is the day in which the foul spirits are abroad, enticing the young and the thoughtless to evil; and if you wish to avoid the misery and degradation in which others have been involved, devote its sacred hours to the purpose for which they were appointed. Attend some place of worship, where the pure evangelical truth of the Scriptures is preached with pathos and with power; and attend regularly; and though some of your associates may reproach you for your fanaticism; and others may turn your habits of devotion into a theme of ridicule, yet will you suffer yourself to be conquered by such a missile weapon? Have you no courage to defend your principles against such a species of assault? or will you, without making an effort to resist, allow the evil spirit of scepticism to destroy your reverence for the sanctity of the day, which you are commanded to keep holy? and alienate your attention from an institution, which God employs as the means of saving them that believe? He who regularly attends a place of worship—who engages with reverence in its devotional exercises—and receives the truth which is preached under a deep conviction of its excellence and importance, enjoys a high mental feast on the Sabbath, and becomes imperceptibly fortified to resist the fascinating seductions of the world; while he who spends the consecrated hours in the society of the impure—amidst scenes of gaiety and dissipation, becomes an easy prey to the worst of temp-

tations—often retires to rest reproaching himself for his folly and impiety, and is gradually led on from one crime to another, till iniquity proves his ruin.

As I wished to hear the celebrated Mr. — in the evening, I asked Mr. Llewellyn to accompany me, but he declined, for reasons which raised him in my estimation as a prudent and consistent young man. "I am, Sir," he observed, "decidedly of opinion that London offers many temptations to professors of religion, which require, on their part, constant vigilance to withstand; and one of the most specious is, the celebrity of preachers who pay us periodical visits." "But," I replied, "do you think it wrong to go and hear those ministers?" "I would be cautious," replied *Mr. Llewellyn*, "how I pass a sentence of condemnation on any one; but I certainly think that the love of novelty in religion often proves pernicious, not only to those who are enslaved by it, but to their families. Let me suppose a case. Here is a religious family who professedly attend the ministry of the Rev. Mr. W—: but the father is in the habit of hearing any and every man of celebrity who visits the metropolis during the year. Will not this roving disposition prevent his forming that attachment towards a pastor and his flock in which the essence of Christian fellowship consists? And will not the influence of his example have an injurious effect on the minds of his children? If he take them with him from place to place, he imperceptibly teaches them to believe that he is not so much delighted with the truth, as with the agent who conveys it. And what is this but sinking the importance and value of the truth in the estimation of those, whose hearts are naturally averse to it. If he refuse to take them with him, and compel them to go, while they are young, to their regular place of worship; yet, as he does not go with them, they are left without the controlling influence of his presence, and are exposed to the temptation of absenting themselves for some scene of amusement. If he leave his more stated minister, to go after these periodical visitors, unless he possess a greater measure of prudence, than such rubenite professors generally possess; he will institute comparisons in the presence of his children, which will have a tendency to excite

prejudice in their minds against the man, under whose ministry they are forced to attend. Will not this prove injurious? Unquestionably. It will alienate their minds from the love of truth, to a regard for its accidental associations; and by teaching them to disrespect the minister of mercy, they will in process of time turn away contemptuously from the message which he delivers.

But, Sir, these are not the only evils which result from the indulgence of this roving disposition, as it is invariably found no less injurious to the private reputation of a Christian, than to his domestic piety." "But how so, Sir," I replied, "what injury can it do the private reputation of a Christian?" "Why," said Mr. Llewellyn, "he will be regarded as an unstable man; and though he may have many virtues adorning his character, yet if this imperfection be associated with them, it will materially injure them. For what influence can an unstable man ever acquire, unless it be the power of doing evil? Who can respect him? Who can place any dependance on him?"

"But," I asked, "may not a Christian leave the ministry of one preacher, to attend that of another, without sustaining or producing any moral injury?" "Most certainly," said Mr. Llewellyn; "we are at perfect liberty in this country, to go where we please, and to hear whom we please; but we should avoid that fickleness of disposition, which is ever moving from one place to another. Some admire the last preacher they hear more than any preceding one, and have the censer always in readiness to throw the incense of flattery around the next, which may make his appearance. Instead of examining themselves, to see what progress they make in knowledge and in grace, and attending on the sabbath to the religious instruction of their children, and their servants; they are ever asking, Who is in town? or, Who is expected? They are the Arabs of the religious world, who pitch and remove their tents so frequently, and so suddenly, that they form no permanent fellowship with any individual community of Christians. But though I condemn most decidedly such a volatile spirit amongst professors, yet I think we ought to attend that ministry which we find the most profitable. The truth which we hear is divine, but the agent who preaches it

is human ; and though his manner of exhibiting it, will not add to its importance, yet it may tend to give it a more commanding power of impression ; and hence, it is no less our duty, than it is our privilege to attend the ministry of that man, whose style of preaching is the most congenial to our taste. The poet in speaking of government, has said,

“ Whate’er is best administered, is best.”

The same may be nearly said, with regard to Sermons. There is not such a marvellous difference between the thoughts and arrangements of one preacher and another, as some imagine. But, who has not been struck (to quote the language of a good writer,) with the difference of the impression, and effect? One man shall speak, and how dry and sapless and uninteresting is he? Let another deliver the very same things, and there is a savor that gives them freshness ; the things seem perfectly new.

When such a man engages in his work, he enters his congregation as Aaron went into the tabernacle to minister, when the precious ointment had been poured on his head, and ran down to the skirts of his garment ; he is found before he is either *seen* or *heard*, and we think of our Christian bard—

“ When one that holds communion with the skies,
Has fill’d his urn, where these pure waters rise
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
’Tis e’en as if an angel shook his wings.
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied.
So when a ship well freighted with the stores,
The sun mures, on India’s spicy shores,
Has dropp’d her anchor, and her canvas furl’d,
In some safe haven of our western world ;
’Twere vain inquiring to what port she *went*,
The *gale* informs us, laden with the scent.”

“ But, Sir,” I remarked, “ if we do not derive that *degree* of improvement and consolation from the ministry on which we generally attend, must we not attribute it to some fault in ourselves. I remember being very much struck with a remark, which I heard the venerable Ingleby make, when addressing his congregation :—‘ If, my brethren,’ he said, ‘ you come to hear *me* preach, instead of hearing *the truth* which I deliver, be not sur-

prised if you are permitted to return, without having felt its purifying and consoling influence. I can do no more than give utterance to the sublime doctrines and promises of the Gospel ; it is the province of my Master to make them effectual to your salvation ; and if you neglect by strong and ardent prayer to implore his blessing, he will withhold it." "A very just and important remark," *Mr. Llewellyn* replied, "and one which I hope we shall never forget. We ought at all times to go into the temple with a devotional spirit, and to remember *that as every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*, we should, in the most humble manner, invoke his presence ; and then we should feel less disposed to rove, and less occasion to complain of the want of consolation. But still as our spiritual improvement and felicity is made to depend so much on the influence of the truth on the heart, and as that truth is known to produce a more powerful effect when we receive it from the lips of one preacher, than it does when it proceeds from those of another, I think we ought to attend where we receive the strongest and the deepest moral impressions ; as it pleases God, who has endowed his servants with a diversity of talents to render the ministerial labours of one man very profitable to us, while we cannot derive so much improvement from those of another, though he preach the same doctrine, with equal, or even a superior degree of pathos and of zeal."

We were now interrupted in our conversation, by the servant, who informed *Mr. Llewellyn* that there were two gentlemen below who wished to see him. "Desire them to walk up. I am not aware," said *Mr. Llewellyn*, "who they are, and I regret their call, as I am not in the habit of receiving company on the sabbath." They entered the room, and one offered an apology for this act of intrusion ; but added, "I know, Sir, you will excuse it, as I have consented to go with you to Chapel this evening along with our mutual friend *Mr. Newton*." I did not immediately recollect this gentleman, though his manners, and his voice seemed familiar to me ; but on hearing his name, I instantaneously recognized *Mr. Gordon*, whom I once met in the country, when enjoying an

evenings ramble. "I am happy to see you, Sir," (addressing myself to Mr. Gordon,) "as it gives me an opportunity of reminding you of a promise* which you have not yet redeemed." "Indeed, Sir?" he replied. "You have the advantage of me. Did I ever make you a promise, which I have not redeemed?" "Yes, Sir." "Where?" "Were you never in a storm, Sir?" "I beg your pardon, Sir. I hope you are well. I am happy to see you in London. I hope, Sir, you will do me the honour of a call. Why no, Sir? I have not been able to inform you of the result of my inquiry, for to be very candid, I have been too much engaged, to turn my attention to it—but I have not forgotten it. What a storm! Did you escape it? I took shelter in a cow-shed." "Yes, Sir," I replied, "I ran to a cottage, where I witnessed a deeply interesting sight. I regretted, Sir, your absence; as I had no doubt but you would have seen an evidence in favour of the truth, and of the excellence of the gospel; which I think you would have admired." "Indeed, Sir," said Mr. Gordon, "what visible evidence do you refer to: A miracle?" "If, Sir, we define a miracle to be something above the production of human power, I should not hesitate to call what I saw a *moral miracle*." I then gave an account of the decease of the Wood-man's child, which he called a very interesting tale; but said, he was not sufficiently enlightened, to perceive how such a fact tended in any way to establish the truth, or display the excellence of Christianity. "We may," he remarked, "have an opportunity to debate over it, Sir, before you leave our great city; but, as we propose going to chapel this evening, perhaps you had better not begin, lest we should be obliged to break off the thread of our argumentation at an unfavourable point. But, Sir, though I have not investigated that important question, which we discussed when we accidentally met at —; yet I will do it. You see, Sir, the company which I keep, (pointing to Mr. Llewellyn, and Mr. Newton,) is a proof that I am *religiously inclined*; and if, Sir, a few doubts should darken my powers of mental vision, yet the light which emanates from their chaste reasoning, may ultimately disperse them, and we all *may* become believers together."

* See No. 10, of this series, pages, 9, 10.

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

THE POOR NEGRO.



“She then ran into the woods, where she concealed herself till she thought all danger was over; but as she came forth one night, to re-visit the scene of her native joy, now turned into the desolation of grief, she was caught by the destroyers of her country, and doomed to share the same fate with the other branches of her family.”

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THE POOR NEGRO.

“And what man seeing this,
And having human feelings, does not blush,
And hang his head, to think himself a man.” *Cowper.*

As I sat one morning, listening to the strange cries of London, and observing the different countenances of the numerous pedestrians which were passing to and fro, with hurried steps, as though each one was intent on the accomplishment of some great purpose, I heard a knock at the door, and soon after the servant entered the parlour with a letter addressed to me. This excited my surprize, as I was not conscious that any one knew of my arrival but my friend, Mr. Llewellyn, and the few domestics of his household. “Who brought it, John?” was a question which I very naturally proposed. “It is some black servant, Sir, but I do not know him.” Before I had received the answer, I perceived from the signature of the letter, that it came from Mr. Wilcox, the gentleman with whom I exchanged cards on leaving the mail: and it was to request me and Mr. Llewellyn to dine with him in the early part of the following week. “Desire the servant to walk in.” “Yes, Sir.” On his entering the room, I was much struck with the ease and gracefulness of his manners; and as I wished to gain some information on the subject of slavery, I pressed him to take a seat. He was a fine looking man, near five feet ten inches high, about twenty-five years of age, could speak the English language fluently, and rather more correctly than most: though he still retained the peculiar accent and pronunciation of his countrymen, and he gave unequivocal proofs of possessing a mind of a superior order. He detailed to me the whole history of his life, from the days of early infancy, up to the time of his arrival in England. This tale of woe was deeply affecting. It often moved me to tears. It brought to my recollection many of the horrid tragedies of Negro cruelty, which I had heard repeated when a boy; and while I involuntarily sighed over injured Africa, I felt the warmth of a virtuous indignation glowing in my breast against her inhuman oppressors.

Peter, for that was the christian name of the emancipated Negro, was the third son of his family, who resided together in the suburbs of a village, situated in the interior of the country. When about nine years of age, as he and his father were planting yams for food, they were seized by a party of kidnappers, but they were rescued by some of their friends, just as they were dragged to the edge of a river where a boat's crew was lying in ambush to receive them. This made a strong impression on his mind, and though young, he never after left home without carrying with him some weapon of defence. When the toils of the day were ended, and the various members of the family associated together to relax their minds from care by joining in the evening song, they would often weep, lest like many others, they should be surprized during the hours of peaceful slumber, and carried off far away to the land of slaves. "It was," he said, "after an hour thus spent they retired to rest: but they had not slept long, before they were disturbed by an unusual noise. They suddenly arose, when they were surrounded by an armed force. His mother, with her infant at her breast rushed forward and escaped: and so did his eldest brother, but the rest were hand-cuffed and tied together within the space of a few minutes." They now wept aloud, but no tears, no groans, no loud lamentations of woe could move the callous breast of the merciless Slave dealer. The first lash of his whip fell on the eldest daughter, which roused the indignant feelings of the whole family, but alas! they could not protect her. She refused to walk, and bore the reiterated strokes of the torturous instrument of cruelty, till the blood ran in streamlets on the ground; when some of the savage crew disengaged her from the rest, and dragged her by the arms towards the brink of the river. Here they remained about the space of two hours, when another party arrived with another drove of poor grief worn captives, who sighed and wept as they were forced into the boat that was waiting to convey them to the ship riding at anchor about two miles from the shore. When they went on board they saw several of their friends, and many other of their countrymen sitting, chained together in different groups on the deck, who

immediately raised a piteous yelling cry, which would have moved to tenderness and commiseration any breast but that of the cruel Slave Merchant, and his hardened crew. The men were immediately confined two and two together, by the neck, or leg, or arm with fetters of solid iron.

To give the reader an accurate description of them when thus secured, I will quote the language of an Author, who has written with the accuracy of a faithful eye-witness. "When the slaves are confined together, they are then put into their apartments: the men occupying the fore part, the women the after part, and the children the middle of the vessel. The tops of these apartments are grated for the admission of light and air, and they are stowed away like any other lumber, occupying such quantity of room as has been allotted to them. Many of them while the ships are waiting for their full lading, and whilst they are near their native shore, from which they are to be separated for ever, have manifested great appearance of oppression and distress; and in some cases have resorted for apprehended relief, to suicide; others have been affected with delirium and madness; others again have been actuated by a spirit of revenge, and have resolved on punishing their oppressors at the hazard of their own lives. In the day time, if the weather be fine, they are brought upon deck for air. They are placed together in a long row of two and two together on each side of the ship, a long chain is then made to pass through the shackles of each pair, by which means each row is at once secured to the deck. In this state they take their meals, which consist chiefly of horse beans, rice, and yams, with a little palm oil and pepper. Captain Hall says, that they are made after meals, to jump as high as their fetters will let them, on beating a drum; if they refuse they are whipped till they comply. This the Slave Merchants call dancing."

As they were sitting on deck a few days after their captivity, looking with pensive sadness on the land which gave them birth, and where they once hoped to rest with their forefathers, when they had finished their mortal course, they espied the fatal boat advancing towards them. It was with difficulty that the sailors

could manage it, as a sudden squall came on; but at length it was lashed to the side of the ship, and they proceeded to remove their ill-gotten prize. The first that was hauled up was a young female about the age of eighteen, who was a stranger. She wrung her hands in the anguish of despair, wept aloud on looking round, and then by a sudden spring over the side of the ship plunged herself into the sea, and perished. The next was a youth whom they knew: and he was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. He would have followed the example which his fellow captive had just set him, but he was too strictly guarded. The last was their own mother, with her infant still in her arms, as when she rushed out of her dwelling, and made her escape. She then ran into the woods where she concealed herself till she thought all danger was over, but as she came forth one night to re-visit the scene of her native joy, now turned into the desolation of grief, she was caught by the destroyers of her country, and doomed to share the same fate with the other branches of her family. When they recognized each other, though in the strong hold of cruelty, the feelings of nature burst forth into a mutual expression of joy; but a circumstance occurred which soon plunged them into the depths of frantic agony. The infant child was considered by the captain as more likely to perish in the middle passage, than to survive the voyage; and being roused to anger by the gratification which all expressed at the escape of the first captive who was put on board, he ordered one of his men to cast it into the sea. When this deed was done, the mother plunged about on deck, as one suddenly bereft of her senses, till she swooned off into a state of utter insensibility, and was carried below.

When the ship had received her complement of slaves on board, she weighed anchor, and began what is termed the *middle passage*, to take them to their respective colonies. The horrors of this stage of their degradation and woe exceed all possible description, but the following statement* will give the reader some faint conception of it. A grown up person, when

* Vide Dr. Rees's Cyclopædia.

stowed away for the voyage, is allowed sixteen inches in width, two feet eight inches in height, and five feet eleven inches in length. Within this small space they are obliged to lie on their backs; and if they are the least dilatory or reluctant in packing themselves, they are quickened by the application of the whip. But now their situation becomes too wretched to be described. No language has words to explain it properly. Captain Hall has often heard them cry out from below for want of air. The bad effects which resulted from this, and their confinement, were weakness and fainting; and as they always lie, whether well or ill, on the bare planks, the motion of the ship rubs the flesh from the prominent parts of the body, and leaves their bones almost bare.

The ships, having borne their enslaved captives through the middle passage, cast anchor in their destined ports, and the unhappy Africans are prepared for sale; but no change which takes place in this history of cruelty brings over their minds the light of deliverance, or the cheering prospect of returning happiness. Alas, no! Once seized by the ruffian hand of the merchant he is doomed to end his days under the iron yoke of bondage; and though he possesses the same social dispositions as those of the human family who breathe the air of freedom, yet there is no respect paid to their gratification.

There is something extremely shocking, to a humane and cultivated mind, in the idea of beholding a numerous body of our unfortunate fellow creatures in captivity and exile, exposed naked to public view, and sold like an herd of cattle. The following account of one of these sales, given by a traveller of unimpeached veracity, will convey a precise idea of the scene. "The poor Africans who were to be sold were exposed naked, in a large open building like an empty barn. Those who came with an intention to purchase, minutely inspected them; handled them; made them jump, and stamp with their feet, and throw out their arms and legs; turned them about; looked into their mouths; and, according to the usual rules of traffic with respect to cattle, examined them, and made them shew themselves in a variety of ways, to try if they were sound

and healthy. All this was distressful and humiliating; but a wound still more severe was inflicted on the feelings, by some of the purchasers selecting only such as their judgment led them to prefer, regardless of the bonds of nature and affection. The husband was taken from the wife—children separated from their parents—and the lover torn from his mistress.”

In one part of the building was seen a wife, clinging to her husband. Here was a sister hanging upon the neck of her mother. There stood two brothers enfolded in each others arms, mutually bewailing their threatened separation. In other parts were friends, relations, and companions, praying to be sold to the same masters; using signs to signify that they would be content with slavery might they but toil together. Silent tears, deep sighs, and heavy lamentations, bespoke the universal suffering of these poor Blacks. Never was scene more distressful. Amongst these unhappy, degraded Africans, scarcely was there an unclouded countenance.

“My mother,” said *Peter*, “died while in the *middle* passage, and we saw her carried out of the hold to be cast into the sea. The rest of us reached Jamaica alive, but in a most emaciated condition. My Father and I were sold to one planter, and we were immediately taken away, but what became of my brother and sister I could never learn. My Father did not live above three months after he was set to labour, and the cruel driver often beat him till the blood ran down his back, because he would not do more work. I was glad when he died! O yes, I wished to die too; but I was spared to see happier days.”

Peter was employed after the death of his father, as a domestic slave by one of the overseers, who became much attached to him, and often granted him some indulgences which very considerably mitigated the horrors of slavery. That which he prized most, was permission to go and hear the Rev. Mr.—the missionary, preach, whose ministry became the means of conveying to his heart the incorruptible seed of truth which liveth and abideth for ever. He also taught him to read and write, and supplied him with books, and at length introduced him to Mr. Wilcox, who purchased his freedom. “I was stolen,” he said, “from my native country, and sold

like Joseph into bondage; but the Lord was pleased to overrule all this for my salvation; but, Sir, no thanks are due to the thief who stole me, nor to the planter who bought me, when he knew that I was stolen."

"I have often heard," I remarked, "that the Negroes in the West Indies are happy, and contented with their situation; do you think this statement is correct?"

"Do you think, Sir," replied *Peter*, "that you should be happy, if a black crew were to come a shore and steal you away, and chain you up, and then take you to some part in Africa, and sell you to some hard hearted black, who might whip you, and even kill you with his knife, or work you to death by hard labour?" "Why no," I replied, "I do not think that my happiness would be promoted by such a measure."

"Then, Sir, why should any one suppose, that such measures make black people happy. We love our country, as much as you love yours; we love our relations and our friends, and we love liberty; and can you imagine that we can loose

all, and yet not feel the loss? O yes! we do feel it. I often wept when I thought of home, and my poor little sister, who was taken from the arms of my mother and thrown into the sea—and of my mother who died in that horrid *middle* passage—and of the hill I used to run up and down, when a little boy."

"Then do you think," I asked, "that the Negroes in the West Indies are unhappy?" "If they were not, Sir, would they kill themselves to get away from their cruel masters?"

"But some of them have kind masters, have they not?" "Yes, Sir, some masters are much kinder than others;

but no Negro can be happy, while he is a slave, unless it please God to redeem him from all iniquity, by the precious blood of Jesus Christ."

"Why not," I asked. "Because he is a slave, unjustly deprived of his liberty,

and doomed to perpetual bondage. This alternately depresses and irritates his spirit: and sometimes he thinks of taking away his own life, and sometimes of revenging himself on the life of his master. What has he to make him happy? If he form an attachment to any local spot, or to any of his fellow slaves; he has no security for the continuance of these objects of his gratification. His friend may be sold to another planter, and they may never meet again: or he may be removed

to some other plantation, and may never be permitted to return." "But you admit," I observed, "that the gospel of Jesus Christ can make a Negro happy and contented, even while he is deprived of his liberty, and exposed to the most cruel and barbarous inflictions of punishment." "It can make him happy, Sir," said *Peter* with great animation, "but it does not make him approve of the cruelties which have been, and still are practised on him. He bows his neck to the yoke, but he is still of opinion, that no man has a right to force him to wear it." "Would then," I asked, "those Negroes who have embraced the gospel, throw off the yoke of servitude if they had it in their power?" "I do not believe," said *Peter*, "that they would use any unlawful means to regain that liberty of which they have been so unjustly deprived, as they are commanded to *be obedient to them that are their masters*." "But is not this injunction, to be obedient to the slave master, a proof that God approves of slavery?" "No, Sir," said *Peter*, "he cannot approve of slavery; because it is unjust in its principle, cruel in its spirit, and destructive of personal and domestic happiness. He has commanded us to be obedient, it is true, but that's no proof that he approves of the authority which the planter exercises over us. He has commanded us, when we are struck on one cheek, to turn the other also, but does it follow that he approves of such conduct?"

"Certainly not," I replied, "and I am happy that you can draw the line of distinction with such a steady hand, between your obligations to obey in consequence of the divine precept, and your right to condemn, in the most direct, and most positive terms, that authority which your masters exercise over you. But as it is to the interest of the planter to treat his slaves with lenity and kindness, that he may, if possible, attach them to his person and his service, I presume that the instances of cruelty of which we have sometimes heard are very few indeed." "Such instances of cruelty, as flogging slaves to death, or torturing them till they are disabled and rendered incapable of doing any more work, are not very common: but, Sir," *Peter* replied, "the slaves are treated in general as an inferior race of human beings—as the offal of society—as of no more consequence in

the scale of being than a beast of burden, whose value depends on age, health and activity, and who may be treated with neglect in sickness, and with contempt when in health, without offending either the law of God or man."

And to confirm the truth of this statement, I will close this number, by selecting a case of cruelty, as reported in a letter from Lord Seaforth, the Governor of Barbadoes, in which he says, "a Mr. Colbeck, who lives overseer on Cabbage-tree plantation, in St. Lucy's parish, *had bought a new Negro boy out of the yard* (meaning the slave yard, where Negroes are exposed to sale, in the same manner as the cattle and sheep in Smithfield market,) and carried him home. Conceiving a liking to the boy, he took him into the house and made him wait at table. Mr. Crone, the overseer of Rowe's estate, which is near to Cabbage-tree plantation, was in the habit of visiting Mr. Colbeck, *had noticed the boy, and knew him well.* A fire happening one night in the neighbourhood, Colbeck went to give his assistance, and the boy followed him. Colbeck, on his return home, missed the boy, who had lost his way; and as he did not make his appearance the next day, he sent round to his neighbours, and *particularly to Crone, informing them, that his African lad had strayed, that he could not speak a word of English,* and possibly he might be found breaking some sugar canes, or taking something else for his support: in which case he requested they would not injure him, but send him home, and he would pay any damage the boy might have committed. After a lapse of two or three days, the poor creature was discovered in a gulley (or deep water-course) near to Rowe's estate; and a number of Negroes were soon assembled about the place. The boy, naturally terrified with the threats, the noise, and the appearance of so many people, retreated into a hole in a rock, having a stone in his hand, for the purpose, probably, of defence. By this time, Crone, and some other white persons, had come up *By their orders a fire was put to the hole where the boy lay, who when he began to be scorched, ran from his hiding-place into a pool of water which was near.* Some of the Negroes pursued him into the pool; and the boy, it is said, threw the stone which he held in his

hand at one of them. On this, two of the white men, Crone and Hollingsworth, *fired at the boy several times with shot, and the Negroes pelted him with stones. He was at length dragged out of the pool in a dying condition; for he had not only received several bruises from the stones, but his breast was so pierced with the shot that it was like a cullender.* The white savages (this is the language of Mr. Attorney-General Beccles) ordered the Negroes to dig a grave. *Whilst they were digging it, the poor creature made signs of begging for water, which was not given to him: but as soon as the grave was dug, he was thrown into it and covered over, and, as is believed, WHILE YET ALIVE.* Colbeck, the owner of the boy, hearing that a Negro had been killed, went to Crone to inquire into the truth of the report. Crone *told him, that a Negro had been killed and buried, but assured him it was not his, for he knew him well,* and he need not be at the trouble of opening the grave. On this, Colbeck *went away SATISFIED!* Receiving, however, further information, he returned, and had the grave opened, when he found the murdered Negro to be his own. Colbeck brought his action of damages in the courts of the island against Crone and Hollingsworth. The cause was ready to be tried, and the Court had met for the purpose, when they thought proper to pay double the value of the boy, and twenty-five pounds for the use of the island, (being five pounds less than the penalty fixed by law, of fifteen pounds currency each,) rather than suffer the business to go to a hearing. ‘This, I am truly sorry to say,’ observes the Advocate-General, ‘*was the only punishment which could be inflicted for so barbarous and atrocious a crime.*’

“This horrid recital (which is given almost in the words of the Report, merely avoiding repetition) seems to require little comment. One circumstance of it, however, may not strike the minds of some readers with its due force, although it appears to be the most affecting part of the whole case. Colbeck, it is said, on hearing that it was not his slave who had been murdered, WENT AWAY SATISFIED! O most opprobrious satisfaction! The preceding part of the narrative had prepared us to expect in Colbeck some approximation to European feeling. But what is the fact? On being coolly told that a

Negro had been killed and buried—told so by his neighbour, the murderer—is he shocked? Does he express any horror or indignation on the occasion? No! he goes away *satisfied*!! Let the reader give its due weight to this one circumstance, and he must be convinced that a state of society must exist in the West Indies, of which, as an inhabitant of this happy island, he can scarcely form any adequate conceptions. Suppose, instead of a Negro slave, that it had been a horse which had been thus killed: Colbeck, had his horse happened to be missing at the time, would have pursued exactly the same steps, and would have been affected in the same way as in the present instance.—We may also learn, from this impressive circumstance, the value of West-Indian testimony when given in favour of West-Indian humanity. The moral perceptions and feelings which prevail in that quarter of the world, it will be perceived, are wholly different from those on this side of the Atlantic. It may be allowed that these men mean what they say, when they give each other the praise of humanity. But examine their standard. Who is this man of humanity? It is one, who, hearing that a fellow-creature has been cruelly and wantonly murdered, *goes away satisfied*, because he himself has sustained no loss by the murder! An exception may be admitted in favour of a few men of enlightened minds; but the remark applies to *the people*—to the bulk of the community, whose prejudices are stated by Lord Seaforth to be so *horribly absurd* as to resist all measures for remedying this dreadful state of things.

The Author acknowledges with gratitude the following sums, received on behalf of the Widow, alluded to in No. 30, of this series.

A Lady.....	1	0	0
E. B.	1	0	0
A Mite	0	10	0
M. A. S. & C.	0	10	0
Mr. Gray	0	14	6
A little Boy.....	0	10	0
By Mr. Westley	5	0	0

[No. 48.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

ON CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

PART I.



"The high priest of death advances with an averted face, bearing the lighted torch in his hand, with which he sets fire to the pile. Who is he? Her eldest son! Hapless mother! doomed to suckle at thy tender bosom thy fell murderer!—Ill-fated son! doomed to imbrue thy hand in the blood of her who bore thee!"

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1824.

ON CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

PART I.

"In India you will witness the predominance of a system which provides for the worship of gods many, and of lords many, while it excludes the adoration of the Supreme Being—legitimizes cruelty, polygamy, and lust—debases the standard of morals—oppresses with ceremonies those which it deprives of instruction—and suggests no solid hope of happiness beyond the grave."

Hall.

It is impossible to describe the emotions which are excited in the human mind when surveying the beautiful change which nature undergoes by the return of spring. She rises from her dormant and inactive state, and decks herself in beauty and in glory. The long neglected garden, favourable for contemplation and industry, is revisited, and the inanimate objects which it contains are hailed as old friends alive from the dead. Here the wisest have become wiser, and the good, by the aid of meditation and devotion, have grown in knowledge and in grace. Here genius has resorted for relaxation, after the fatigue of intellectual labour; here poetry has retired for more sublime and enraptured elevation of feeling; and the hero of war has been known to exchange the sword for the pruning knife, and the honour of conquest for the pleasure of planting a seed, or protecting a flower. The lovely May is now smiling upon hill and dale—on open plains, and the crowded city; proclaiming, in sweetest accents, that *the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.*

—"Sweet month!

If not the first, the fairest of the year!"

Welcome, no less to the friends of religion than the lovers of nature, as it opens to each the source of his most refined enjoyment. The one wanders into the country, where he gazes on trees and shrubs—on foliage and blossoms—on springing grass, and rising corn—on sunny banks, and shady bowers—on a cloudless, or a streaked sky; and, while listening to the warbling notes of the feathered tribe, or the rural sounds which come

from neighbouring, or distant glens, he feels an extacy of delight which is peculiarly his own. To call him away from this feast of soul, would be to disturb his bliss in the high place of its gratification; but to reproach him for his folly, in pretending to derive some undefinable yet exquisite gratification from such scenes, would be to offer an insult to the general taste and feelings of mankind. But, without casting a shade of reflection over the beauties of spring, or embittering, by any cynical remarks, that high enjoyment which they afford to a refined taste, I do not hesitate to say, that the pleasure which the successive weeks of this month afford to the friends of religion in the Metropolis, is infinitely more satisfactory and beneficial.

If to witness the progress of civilization amongst the rude and barbarous—the march of intellectual and moral improvement amongst the ignorant and impure—and the peaceful dissemination of the enlightening and consolatory doctrines and promises of salvation amongst the benighted and unhappy, be calculated to make the rapturous emotion of joy thrill through the soul of a Christian, I do not know where he is so likely to feel this mighty sensation, as by an attendance at the anniversary of our Missionary Societies. The chaste and subduing eloquence which the preachers and speakers generally display on these occasions—the detailed accounts which they give of the success of the different missions—and the strong and interesting appeals which they make to the enlightened judgment and sanctified feelings of their audience, have excited emotions of joy, gratitude, and ardour, not to be described. Indeed, to be adequately known, they must be felt. On these occasions, many a dull and torpid soul has been roused from his mental slumbers, to form plans of general usefulness to society; many an undecided spirit has been won over to the cause of benevolence and religion; and many who were moving on, in the obscure walks of life, have had that zeal enkindled within their breasts, for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the salvation of man, which has led them to sacrifice the endearments of social life, for the high honour of promoting these great designs. Yes! many, whose names are enrolled in the annals of Christian fame, and whose memory will be embalmed in

the grateful recollections of regenerated barbarians, would have died, alike unknowing and unknown, in the parishes which gave them birth, had not an unseen hand guided them to a Missionary Anniversary, where they were induced to form the noble resolution, to devote themselves to the service of Him who has blessed them, and made them blessings.

But as some of my readers may not be acquainted with the nature and design of a Missionary Society, and others may have some strong doubts respecting the necessity or utility of their operations, I will devote a few numbers to this subject. There are in this kingdom and in Scotland no less than ten different societies, which are known under the following designations.

I. Society for promoting Christian Knowledge; founded in the year 1698.

II. Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; established in 1701.

III. Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge in the Highlands and Islands; incorporated in 1709.

IV. Missions of the United Brethren; commenced in 1732.

V. Wesleyan Missions; commenced in 1786.

VI. Baptist Missionary Society; established in 1792.

VII. The Missionary Society; established in 1795.

VIII. Edinburgh Missionary Society; instituted in 1796.

IX. Church Missionary Society; founded in 1800.

X. General Baptist Missionary Society; established in 1821.

These societies are formed by the friends of religion in this kingdom, not for any secular, or political, or sectarian purpose, but to convey to the inhabitants of heathen, and other unenlightened nations, a knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To do this, they select pious young men from amongst themselves, who, after acquiring a knowledge of the classics, and attending different courses of lectures at some college, or public seminary, in this kingdom, or in Scotland, go to various parts of the world—take up their residence amongst the people—learn their language—and then explain to them the truths of the Scriptures, which are able to make

them wise unto salvation. While they are receiving their preparatory education in this country, and after they have taken their appointed stations in foreign parts, with some few exceptions, they are entirely dependent for support, on the societies which employ them. For though they carry with them that spiritual treasure which is to enrich an impoverished world, yet the people to whom they offer it are generally so insensible to its value, that they will not give food, or raiment, or a local habitation, to the agents who take it to them.

One question, which will very naturally arise in the breast of every reflecting mind, is this,—Do the people to whom you send the Gospel of Jesus Christ actually need it? As their forefathers have lived and died without it, why should not their descendants be left in the same moral condition? In reply to this question I would say, that wherever any people are destitute of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, they are absolutely ignorant of the nature or extent of their obligations to God and to man; and, without any exception which the history of the world has yet supplied, they live in a state of moral degradation and impurity, which no humane or benevolent person can contemplate, but with the utmost degree of astonishment and pity. That we should worship God as our Creator, our Legislator, and our Judge, is so generally admitted in this kingdom as a duty binding upon all, that if any one assert to the contrary, his moral character at once sinks in our estimation, and, unless our principles are contaminated, we should shun him as a dangerous associate. But suppose we were to see this self-same person kneeling down before a metallic image cast at some foundry, or before some shapeless figure formed out of a log of wood; and suppose we were to hear him offering up his thanksgiving to these lifeless substances for his health, and for his food; and suppose we should hear him praying to them to be protected against disease and trouble; should we not pity him as some poor unhappy maniac broke loose from the asylum where these outcast children of misery are confined and taken care of? Most certainly. If, then, we go to any nation under heaven where the Gospel of Jesus Christ has not been propagated amongst the people, we shall find all of them—

whether learned or illiterate—rich or poor—honourable or debased—worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. One poor idolater bows to “the host of heaven;” another trembles before an evil spirit. Here he finds his divinities in birds, and beasts, and reptiles; there he “changes the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man,” and lies prostrate before a deity of stone or of wood, the work of his chisel or his axe. *He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it: he maketh a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire: with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied; yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god. And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burnt part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it; and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?* Isa. xlv. 14—17, 19. After having seen many hundred millions of your fellow men, who are endowed with the same intellectual faculties as yourself, living without any accurate knowledge of the true God, and rendering that homage to dumb and senseless idols, which He alone has a just-right to claim, do you require any other argument to convince you that they need the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the only moral expedient that has ever been known to destroy idolatry, and reclaim the people to the worship and service of their Maker.

But if you do require another argument, I will throw open to your view some of the cruelties which abound in those countries where it is not known. “Cruelties which are nothing less (to quote the language of a living

author,) than a daring outrage on the laws of humanity, and which, if not practised under the broad day-light of public observation, and attested by eye-witnesses, we should regard as the fabulous tales of some monstrous age, when demons were permitted to possess not only the minds but the bodies of men.

"We will notice the cruelties which the Hindoo practises on himself and on others. At the annual festival in honour of Mūha Dēv, (the great God,) many persons are suspended in the air by large hooks, thrust through the integuments of their backs, and swung round for a quarter of an hour, in honour of this deity; and often over a slow fire. Others have their sides pierced, and cords are introduced between the skin and the ribs, which cords are drawn backwards and forwards while these victims of superstition dance through the streets. Others cast themselves from a stage, ten feet high, upon open knives inserted in packs of cotton. Sometimes one of these knives enters the body, and the poor wretch is carried off to expire.

"The Hindoo writings encourage persons afflicted with incurable distempers to put an end to their existence by casting themselves under the wheels of the car of Jüggernaut, or into some sacred river, or into a fire prepared for the purpose; promising such self-murderers that they shall rise to birth again in a healthful body, whereas by dying a natural death, they would be liable to have the disease perpetuated in the next and succeeding births. Multitudes of lepers, and other children of sorrow, perish annually in these prescribed modes. Mr. William Carey, the second son of the celebrated Dr. Carey, states, that he was one morning informed that some people had dug a hole in the earth, not far from his own house, and had begun to kindle a fire in it. He immediately proceeded to the spot, and saw a poor leper, who had been deprived of the use of his limbs by the disease, roll himself over and over till at last he fell into the pit amidst the flames. Smarting with agony, his screams became dreadful. He called to his family, who surrounded the pit, and entreated them to deliver him,—but he called in vain. His own sister, seeing him lift his hands to the side, pushed him back again; when (these relations still coolly gazing upon the sufferer,) he

perished, enduring indescribable agonies' Had you been there, and been permitted to have yielded to the impulse of your feelings, you would have brought him up out of this horrible pit, and set his feet upon *our Rock*; but, alas! there is no pity—no mercy—no tenderness of heart in Moloch's kingdom.

"The custom of burning widows on the funeral piles of their deceased husbands is now very generally known, but I fear that it has not excited all that intense anxiety for its suppression which it ought to inspire in every Christian bosom.* After the widow has declared her resolution to burn, she leaves her house for the last time, with her children, relations, and a few neighbours. She proceeds to a river, when a priest attends upon her, and where certain ceremonies are performed, accom-

* The author has lately received a letter from India, in which the writer, alluding to the sermon from which these extracts are taken, says, "It will, I doubt not, afford you a painful satisfaction to learn, from an eye-witness of many of the scenes which are delineated, that though the colouring which is given be vivid, it is not more vivid than accurate. Let the following statement, which was related to me yesterday by Miss Ward, eldest daughter of the much lamented Mr. Ward of Serampore, be taken as a corroborative evidence of its truth. A man and his wife, whose age was not more than seventeen, resided in the vicinity of a female school which Miss W. and the other junior female branches of the Serampore Mission family, superintended. The man was attacked by a fever, and applied to Miss W. for medicine, which she administered, and frequently conversed on religion with his wife. The malady proved fatal, and his wife became a widow, and immediately resolved upon being burnt with the dead body of her husband. Her neighbours, her friends, and her relatives urged every argument which they conceived would be operative to dissuade her from her purpose, but in vain. The native Christians of Serampore visited her, and expostulated with her, but without effect. Miss W. said she was altogether a different person. Previously to her husband's death she was modest, and very attentive to what they might say; but now there was a fiend-like decision about her which made her appear almost a subject of demoniac possession. Dr. Marshman and Mr. Mack visited her, but their interview was equally inefficacious. Some of her relatives told her, they knew she would shrink from it when it came to the last; to whom she replied, 'Shall I? bring me a light, and I will shew you.' A light was brought, which she took, and put one of her fingers into the flame, and there continued it till it was consumed from her hand. Application was then made by the relatives to the Judge of the Serampore district, for permission to burn

panied by ablution. When these are over, she comes up to the pile, walks slowly round it several times, and at length lays herself down by the dead body, placing her arm over it. Two cords are now thrown over the pile, with which the dead and the living are bound together; a large quantity of faggots are laid upon them, and two levers are used to press down the widow, to prevent her from making her escape when the flames begin to scorch her! Now, mark the pure demoniac cruelty of their system! The high priest of death ad-

the widow with the body, which permission the Judge absolutely refused. A similar application was then made to the Governor, who also refused; and during the whole day they continued to apply, and receive denials. But when the Governor learned that she had already consumed her finger, and that the whole family would now lose *caste* if she was not permitted, he granted his permission, but attended himself with a party of soldiers, that no violence might be used in urging her to the act, or in constraining her to endure what she had voluntarily chosen. She then anointed herself and the body, and both were carried to the brink of the river, where a large pile of wood was heaped up, and the body laid upon it. She requested her brothers to lift her up to it, which they did; she lay by the side of the dead body, embracing it, and a quantity of wood, on which they poured ghee, (clarified butter,) was thrown upon them. The torch was applied, and the flame ascended, but not a sigh nor a groan was heard from this wretched victim of superstition. In this depth of misery she perished, 'a lower deep still opening to devour her.' This, Sir, is the system which, for so many years, has been palmed upon the religious public in England, as an enlightened, intelligent, and almost immaculate code of morals; and these are the people, whose whole history does not furnish an instance of a hospital for the sick, or an asylum for the infirm, who have been termed the innocent, the inoffensive, and hospitable Hindoos;—'Oh! cursed be their bigotry, for it is fierce; and their superstition, for it is cruel. My soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united.'

"Other parts of the sermon I could illustrate from personal observation. Not twenty yards from our door, at one of their religious festivals, they erected a scaffold, from ten to fourteen feet in height, from which many, being stupified with arrack, a deadly spirit, leaped on a number of spikes which were placed on the ground. Others had large spits passed through various parts of the body, as the tongue, the arms, the breast, &c.; with other scenes which, were I to relate, I should shock humanity, and violate the sacred claims of chastity. These are endured to obtain remission of sins. 'Their rock is not as our rock, our enemies themselves being judges.'

vances, with an averted face, bearing the lighted torch in his hand, with which he sets fire to the pile. Who is he? Her eldest son! Hapless mother! doomed to suckle at thy tender bosom thy fell murderer!—Ill-fated son! doomed to imbrue thy hand in the blood of her who bore thee! But on some occasions the strength of the maternal feeling will suspend, at least for a season, the power of superstition; as the following fact will attest:—A widow, when seated on the pile, heard the cries of her lovely infant; she arose, took her child, suckled it, and returned it to a friend.

‘ True, ’twas hard to part,
While it unconscious laugh’d, and stretch’d its arms
For one more weeping kiss; and knew not why
The mother sobb’d with bursting agony.
Now her firm soul hath overcome the struggle!
’Twas natural she should weep, but she hath done
With earthly things.

—She remounts the pile;
One moment stands there as in agony,
Lifting her eyes the last time to the sun;
The next—she drops! The demon priests are up,
Savage at work: with might and main they pull
And bind the victims,—dead and living lock’d
In firm embrace!—’Tis done!—the blasting flame
Burns rapidly; while the undulating smoke,
Like damned clouds, cast from the mouth of hell,
Black hovers round. The hideous death-song wails
From howling friends. The roar of multitudes,
The voice of filthy drum, and every shriek,
Shout, yell, and moan, proclaim the horrid triumph,
And she is gone for ever!’

“In Christian countries the aged and infirm are generally placed under the benign care of others, who feel a high gratification in administering the last draught of human consolation. But beneath the awful frown of paganism, benevolence is not permitted either to sympathize or extend relief. Persons supposed to be dying, particularly if they are aged, are removed from their beds, and carried to the brink of the Sacred River; where, amidst the agonies of departing nature, they are half immersed, while torrents of water are poured on them, till life becomes extinguished.”

An European, some time since, on passing along the streets of Calcutta, observed a miserable creature wasting with sickness, laid out on a couch at the front

of a house. To his enquiry concerning the wretched object, and why he was in that situation without one attendant to care for him, a native replied, "He is dying." "Dying," said the European, "he *must* die if he is thus neglected." To which the native again replied, with equal indifference as at first, "Oh! he is dying." How different the conduct of those who live in this country, where the gospel of Christ has brought the sympathies and sensibilities of our nature to such a high degree of refinement!

"While by the bed of languishment they sit,
And o'er their dying friends in anguish hang;
Wipe the cold dew, or stay the sinking head.

"The social affections, which are cherished in civilized countries by the reciprocal kindness of parent and child, are not allowed a spontaneous growth in those countries where Christianity has not softened the dispositions and the manners of the people. In India the demon of superstition inverts the order of nature, by transforming the parent into a devourer of his own offspring. If the tender infant refuse his mother's milk, instead of being nourished by those other expedients with which we are familiar, he is hung up in a basket on a tree to be devoured by the birds of the air. When the mother of Moses was compelled, by the cruel edict of her monarch, to destroy her child, she placed him in an ark of bulrushes, and set a guard to keep off the alligators of death; but in India the tender mother often sacrifices her first-born to conciliate the favour of her guardian deity in behalf of her unborn progeny. When the child is two or three years old she takes it to the river, encourages it to enter as though about to bathe it, but suffers it to pass into the midst of the current, when she abandons it, and stands an inactive spectator, beholding the struggles, and hearing the screams of her perishing infant. Cruel mother! to decoy thy child into the arms of death! but more cruel system, that eradicates from the mother's breast every maternal feeling, and makes that action a virtue which the law of God and of man denominates murder!

"There is one whole tribe in India which destroys every female child which is born amongst them, so that

they are obliged to take their wives from the tribe next in rank to them. On one occasion a father's heart recoiled when the ministers of vengeance demanded his daughter; he repelled them from his presence, spared her life, and she grew up, tenderly beloved by her parents. But the sight of a girl rising to maturity, in the house of a Rajpoot, was so novel; and so contrary to the customs of the tribe, that no parent sought her in marriage for his son. The grief-worn father, suffering under the frowns of his own tribe, and trembling for the chastity of his daughter, and the honour of his family, bore her off—Where?—to some orphan asylum, where she was secure from the ministers of death? Alas, no! Hindooism never erected such a sacred retreat for human misery.—He took her to some pathless desert, where he slew her, leaving her body the food of worms, or to be devoured by the wild beasts of prey! *

When you look on this scene of moral ignorance and degradation which is visible, with only a few shades of difference, from every part of the world which the gospel of Christ has not yet visited with its enlightening and renovating spirit, can you avoid pitying the poor deluded and wretched people? When you think of the dishonour which they are casting on God—or the enormity of their guilt—on their self-inflicted tortures—when you see them steeling their hearts against the meltings of nature—stopping their ears to the pleadings of parental affection, and giving their first born for their transgression, the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul; when you see them hurried on by the cruel Demon of their own faith, to the verge of self-destruction and after a solemn pause, plunge at once into the invisible world, stained with the blood of their own life, can you suppress the commiserating sigh? Is it possible for you, while such scenes are passing before your eye, not to be convinced that they need that revelation of truth and grace, which it is your unmerited privilege to enjoy, and which by establishing the authority of God, promotes the individual and social happiness of man? Impossible. [48

* These extracts are taken from a sermon preached before the London Missionary Society in the year 1822.

[No. 49.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

ON CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

PART II.



“Indeed, so completely is the scene changed, that the Captain of a vessel, who had known them when in a state of Pagan superstition, happening to enter one of their harbours on a Sabbath-day, concluded that the whole population of the Island was destroyed, as no canoes put off from the shore; nor were there any natives to be seen on the beach to welcome his arrival.”

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1824.

ON CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

PART II.

"O ye orators and philosophers, who make the civilization of the species your dream! look to Christian Missionaries if you want to see the men who realize it. You may deck the theme with the praises of your unsubstantial eloquence; but these are the men who are to accomplish the business! They are now risking every earthly comfort of existence in the cause: while you sit in silken security, and pour upon their holy undertaking the cruelty of your scorn." *Chalmers.*

I have often had occasion to observe, that characters which are essentially different from each other, have often some qualities of affinity, which bring them together in closest union. They walk in contrary paths, but eventually come to that point where they meet; and notwithstanding the repugnance they may feel to an intimate association in all the windings and doublings of their speculative belief, yet when they come into contact, they breathe the same spirit, and display the same moral dispositions. Hence the avowed sceptic, and the Ultra-Calvinist, denominated, in the current language of the Christian church, the Antinomian, are sometimes seen in most intimate fellowship with each other; and though a superficial observer may often wonder, how men, who are as antipodes to each other, can derive any mental gratification from social intercourse; yet if we analyze their character we shall perceive, that in some of its prominent features they betray a strong family likeness. The sceptic, it is true, rejects, as fabulous, that revelation of mercy which the Antinomian embraces as divine, and pours ineffable contempt on those mysterious doctrines, on which he meditates with joy unspeakable; but then they both agree in speaking lightly of sin—in setting aside the authority of the supreme Legislator—they both avow that a personal meetness for the enjoyment of the heavenly state is not only unattainable, but chimerical; and when the moral condition of man is the subject of discussion, they will resolve it into the decree of fate, which renders any change, however desirable,

absolutely impracticable. And though the sceptic treats with indecent levity the scriptural representations of future misery, which the Antinomian admits to be infallibly certain; yet they both oppose, as far as their influence extends, the efforts which the wise and the good are making to convey a knowledge of the way of salvation to the perishing inhabitants of a dying world. The sceptic is the open and avowed enemy of Christianity, who points the shock of his battery against her bulwarks in the open plain, and under the broad day-light of public observation; while the Antinomian is the secret yet malignant foe, who has gained an entrance within her fortresses, where he sows the seed of dissension amongst her ranks—carries on a system of internal warfare—and under the pretence of keeping the faith pure, imbues it with his own proud and misanthropic spirit, till it disdains to pity the contrite, or relieve the outcast and forlorn.

I was informed by my friend, Mr. Llewellyn, that Mr. Gordon, who has been several times introduced to the notice of my readers, had thrown off that external respect which he once paid to the public institutions of religion, and boldly avowed himself an infidel. He sometimes, on a Sabbath evening, attended a place of worship merely to pass away *dull time*, or to form some new acquaintance; and it was on one of these occasions he was first introduced to Mr. Newton. Mr. Newton was the son of an eminent Solicitor in the city, who had occupied a very prominent station in the religious world for many years, but whose mind unhappily had been deeply tinctured with the Antinomian spirit of the age. That the son should imbibe the spirit of his father may be considered as perfectly natural; but in him there was no holy principle to soften its asperity, or to check its violence; and being fond of debate, and of a warm mental temperature, he would often exhibit it, in its native form and character. These two young men of the same age, and the same rank in life, were now become almost inseparable companions; and though Mr. Llewellyn would have receded altogether from their society, if he had followed the bent of his inclination, yet as he possessed great influence over them, he kept up a friendly intercourse, that he might avail himself of

the opportunity which this sometimes afforded him of doing them some moral good.

They had accompanied us on the preceding Sabbath evening to a chapel in the city, where we heard the Rev. Mr. — preach a most excellent sermon from the following words—“*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*” Mark xvi. 15, 16. After a few introductory observations, he advanced three propositions from his text, which he supported with considerable effect:—

I. Christianity is admirably adapted to become a universal religion,

II. It is the duty of all, cordially to co-operate in its universal propagation.

III. Those who receive it shall be saved; but those who reject it shall perish.

After the service was over we separated, without making any allusion to the sermon; but in the course of the ensuing week, when Mr. Gordon and his friend spent an evening with us, our conversation turned on it.

“I think,” said Mr. Gordon, “we had a very good sermon the other evening, and one calculated to make all you believers very zealous in the propagation of the Gospel; but I must confess that I was rather surprized, that he should wish to press the *Deist* into the service of Christian Missions.”

Mr. Newton. “Yes, Sir, and so was I. You Deists ought not to join Christians in conducting the ark of our faith from one nation to another, as that honour belongs exclusively to us; and if I may be allowed to give an opinion, I think that too many display more zeal in this cause than they do knowledge.”

Mr. Llewellyn. “Mr. — said, if my memory does not deceive me, that if Deists wish to propagate their own sentiments, they cannot do it more effectually, than by assisting in the propagation of the Gospel, as deism is a tare which grows only in the field where the seed of truth has been previously sown. Can a Deist who possesses the common feelings of humanity, look on the degradation and the miseries of the poor deluded heathen, without wishing to see that system of idolatry

subverted, which enjoins such horrid rites and obscene ceremonies, as we know they practise. But if he consult the page of history he will learn, that the power of reason, of which he boasts, has never been equal to the task of weakening the powers of superstition and idolatry, much less of destroying them. In Greece, where philosophy shone brightest, the people worshipped 30,000 deities, while Jehovah, the Creator of the universe, was the unknown God ; and in modern times, India furnishes an instance of a similar kind. Only by the Gospel were the Pagan altars overturned, either in Greece or Rome. Hence a sensible Deist, as an intelligent writer remarks, conscious of the insufficiency of reason to promote his designs, must be a friend to the spreading of the Gospel in Pagan nations ; as the experience of all ages has proved, that the Scriptures alone have conveyed the idea of one God to the human mind, and cleared away the gloom of superstition and idolatry. Idolatry with its rites being overthrown, and the idea of one God generally established, then is the time for the Deist with his false philosophy to work, to persuade mankind that this knowledge of the true God is the offspring of the light of nature alone, and that Revelation is of no use. It was not till after God had revealed his existence, character, and will to man, that philosophy taught him first to pervert, and then to reject Revelation, persuading him he could be wise enough, and regulate his own conduct without it."

Mr. Gordon. "I know you good people are in the habit of ascribing some most astonishing powers to Christianity, when her doctrines and precepts are fairly and fully exhibited ; and ever and anon remind us of its splendid triumphs over the idolatry of Greece and Rome ; and though I feel no disposition to attempt to pluck from her brow the laurels she won, when glowing with all the energy and passion of youth ; yet you must confess, that she displays no mighty capabilities in modern times. She talks, it is true, of making new conquests, when it is well known that she cannot keep her present territory without calling in the aid of the civil magistrate, to imprison her potent adversaries ; and though she has organized different societies, which have sent forth their agents, yet what spoils has she taken from the

enemy. It is not generous to reproach a fallen power; but Llewellyn, if the Gospel be, what you say it was in the first ages, that mighty power of God, which over-turned idolatry wherever it went, and made the wilderness of evil to bud and blossom like the garden of Paradise; how can you account for the very feeble impression which it makes amongst the people to whom you have sent it."

Mr. Llewellyn. "Indeed, Sir, Christianity does not require the aid of the civil magistrate to shield her when she is attacked, or avenge her wrongs on those who revile and defame her. She would rather forgive the contumacious offenders, than attempt to subdue their hostility by fines and imprisonment; and when the powers of this world would call down fire from heaven to consume them; or bring up demons from beneath to bear them off, she indignantly says, '*Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.*' When her divine origin is doubted or denied, she appeals to the evidences of her celestial descent; and if they fail to produce a plenary conviction on the enquirer, she leaves him to the consequences of his own scepticism; but gives no sanction to the civil magistrate to inflict any corporeal punishment."

"You rather sarcastically admit the triumphs of the Gospel over the idolatry of Greece and of Rome; but intimate that it is now become so enervated and powerless, that it produces but a very feeble impression amongst those to whom we have sent it. If this were the case, it should not excite our surprize; as we have no reason to expect the extraordinary interposition of divine power in attending it with that signal success, which marked its progress when it was first preached. It is now entrusted to agents, who possess no miraculous endowments; and is left to work its way amongst a people by the slow progress of reason and of persuasion; softening down their prejudices, by rendering its truths familiar to them; and overcoming their hostility by patience and forbearance; displaying at times all the symptoms of a human scheme, which will inevitably fail in accomplishing its professed design; and yet at no period in its history has it gained more illustrious triumphs over ignorance, and superstition, and vice, than in modern times. When the Islands of the South Seas

were discovered by Captain Cook in the year 1769, the people were sunk into the lowest state of barbarism—addicted to every species of wickedness—savage in their manners—the votaries and the victims of a superstition, terrible as death, and insatiable as the grave. In the year 1796, the London Missionary Society was established; and her first Missionaries were sent to these Islands. There they continued year after year, witnessing the degeneracy of the people, without being able to stay its progress; exposed to their insults and derision; sometimes obliged to remove from one island to another for the preservation of their own lives, while the sceptics of Europe were often holding them and their patrons up to contempt, for the folly and madness of their enterprize. Yes, Sir, the zealous advocates of Christian Missions often saw the finger of scorn pointing to the South, when some of your brethren sarcastically asked, *What news?* At length the news came, and so well authenticated, that you dare not contradict it. Idolatry is entirely destroyed; and the deities which the poor deluded islanders so long worshipped, are now deposited in our Missionary Museum, for the express purpose, to quote the language of King Pomare, that we may see *what foolish gods Tahaité formerly worshipped*. They have built chapels, which they have consecrated to the service of the living and the true God, and instituted the observance of the Christian Sabbath; they have parts of the Scriptures,—and some devotional hymns,—and elementary books of general knowledge translated into their language; they are learning to read and write; are becoming acquainted with some of the arts and sciences; are building houses, cultivating the soil, engaging in commercial speculations, and introducing a system of jurisprudence, which would not disgrace an European state. Indeed, so completely is the scene changed, that the Captain of a vessel, who had known them when in a state of Pagan superstition, happening to enter one of their harbours on a Sabbath-day, concluded that the whole population of the Island was destroyed, as no canoes put off from the shore, nor were there any natives to be seen on the beach to welcome his arrival."

Mr. Gordon. "Where were they then?"

Mr. Llewellyn. "In their newly erected temple, wor-
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shipping the Lord of hosts ; and listening to that Gospel which had been the instrumental means of effecting this astonishing moral revolution.—A moral revolution which reflects a greater degree of lustre on Christianity, than she ever acquired in Greece or in Rome ; as it was brought about by the instrumentality of agents, who were endowed with no miraculous powers to demonstrate the divinity of the truth which they proclaimed, or inspire the people with any superstitious veneration for their persons. By men, who were distinguished by no vigour of intellect—by no originality of genius—by no powers of eloquence ; but who, having felt the renewing influence of the truth on their own heart, preached it in its simplicity and purity ; till ignorance and prejudice, and superstition and vice, gave way before its all-subduing power ; and now the light of life illumines these Islands, which for ages were enveloped in Pagan darkness ; and the sacred stillness of unruffled peace, reigns where the tumult of internal war, once made the hills and the vales resound with its harsh and dissonant sounds.”

Mr. Gordon. “They are gone then, according to your own shewing, from Paganism to fanaticism ; thus one evil is rooted up, and the ground cleared for the purpose of planting another.”

Mr. Llewellyn. “I am utterly at a loss to conceive, what you Deists would do for terms of reproach, if you were interdicted the use of the words, fanaticism, and enthusiasm ; but you will permit me to observe, that their introduction on this occasion, is nothing less than a species of artifice, to get away, if possible, from the biting proof, which this moral revolution supplies in favour of the resistless power, and beneficial tendency of pure and undefiled Christianity. Call it fanaticism, or call it enthusiasm if you please, but still there is the change, from ignorance to knowledge—from the worship of wood and stone, to the worship of the living and the true God—from vice to virtue—from beastly indolence to an active industry—from the habits of a barbarous and savage state, to those of civilized life—from the horrors of internal war, to the blessings of social peace ; presenting a scene to the imagination of a benevolent man no less astonishing than it is captivating and delightful ; and which, if not well attested, we

should all conclude, formed some splendid paragraph in a romance, rather than a part of sober and authentic history."

Mr. Gordon. "There may have been some peculiarity in the character of these Islanders, which predisposed them for this change; which when discovered by the Missionaries, was turned to some good account; as I have no doubt they were qualified for their work, though they possessed none of those splendid talents, which a great enterprize required. You have, I believe, Missionaries in other parts of the world, from whom you receive no such fascinating intelligence. They write in rather a desponding strain, if I mistake not. *They find the people not quite so pliable*, as they are in the South Seas; and the demon of superstition, which vacated his throne in honour of the South Sea Missionaries, obstinately retains it where they are labouring; notwithstanding all the charms which they employ to induce him to leave it."

Mr. Llewellyn. "Yes, Sir, we have Missionaries preaching the Gospel in almost every part of the world; and though their success has not equalled the splendid conquests in the South Seas, yet there has been no *entire* failure of any importance. In Africa, where so many wrongs have been committed, the cause of Missions flourishes; and many of the ferocious wanderers have been reclaimed from their state of barbarism, and are now living in settlements, under the superintendence of our Missionaries. Amongst the slaves also in the West Indies, the Gospel is preached with *very* considerable effect; and such is its influence over their minds, that it induces a spirit of contentment under their heavy oppression: and opens to them the prospect of a state of felicity, which no force of language can describe."

Mr. Gordon. "I certainly should not object to give my mite towards sending any thing that was capable of mitigating the sufferings of the poor enslaved negroes; but still you will allow me to say, that you have succeeded only amongst the ignorant and the debased. In India, where idolatry is reduced to a system; where its powers of defence are marshalled in due order, and the great mass of the people are really and permanently interested in their superstitious belief, you have met with

no success. Indeed, I understand, that one who has been employed there for upwards of thirty years, has thrown up his commission in despair; giving it as his decided opinion, that the conversion of the Hindoos is impracticable. Is this true, Sir?"

Mr. Llewellyn. "It is true, Sir, that the Abbe Dubois, a Catholic Missionary, has failed in his attempts to convert the Hindoos to the Catholic faith; but because he failed in his efforts to establish Catholicism in India; is that any valid argument against the probable success of our attempting to establish Christianity? We may succeed, where he failed; but still as I wish to meet the question at once, I confess that I should despair of ever being able to bring over the Hindoos to a belief, and a reception of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, if the agents who are employed in this great work, were left to do it themselves. But they are not—they make no such pretensions; they admit the fact of their own inability to make any deep and permanent impression on the most tender and pliant mind, as explicitly as they avow their dependence on the co-operation of a supernatural power. They expect to triumph over idolatry and vice; but then they say, before they go into the field of contest, that the weapons of their warfare are '*mighty through God*;' and when they gain the victory, they exclaim, '*Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.*' Now, Sir, admitting for the sake of the argument, that the Missionaries who go forth to India to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, can rely on the concurrence of a supernatural power over the judgment and passions of the people, to induce them to receive it; would you say, that their conversion is impracticable?"

Mr. Gordon. "Certainly not; for that would be to invest the demon of superstition with a power to withstand Omnipotence; but have you ever succeeded in your speculations in India?"

Mr. Llewellyn. "Yes, there are some hundreds of Hindoo Pagans and Mahommedans, who have embraced Christianity since the Missionaries, which went from this country, have been settled in India. This is a fact, placed in the records of history, and confirmed by the

testimony of eye witnesses. At Serampore, Calcutta, Cutwa, and many other places, there are Christian societies, consisting of more than one hundred members each, of converts from the Mahommedan and Brahminical faith; and though prejudice would say, that they are taken from the refuse of the people; yet we know that some of them have been from the higher ranks of life. Krishnoo-Prisad was the first Brahmin who was baptized in Bengal; he lived only a few years after he embraced the Christian faith, when he died full of hope of a blessed immortality. Ramnshun, a Brahmin of the highest cast, has renounced the superstition of his country, and embraced Christianity. When a Pagan, he set fire to the pile in which his living mother was consumed to ashes; but now he has devoted himself to a nobler cause, and is a most able and persuasive preacher of the Gospel. Allow me to take the following fact from a recent publication:—‘A Bramhūn recently baptized had, while a heathen, taken a vow of perpetual silence, and had kept this vow for four years, residing during this time, at the celebrated temple of Kalee, near Calcutta. He was held in such reverence, that when he passed through the streets of Calcutta, the rich Hindoos hurried down from their houses, and threw themselves at his feet, to worship him as a deity. He wore several necklaces made of the bones of serpents, and his whole appearance was that of a being who had changed the human state and form. Let us look at this man for a moment: he possesses all the pride arising from his descent from the highest order in his country, and from the homage he receives from the adoring crowd. How sunk in all the brutality of the jogee! How intoxicated with the fumes of an imagination, which sees deity in every thing, and every thing in deity, and with the idea by which he identifies himself with God! How shall the Christian Missionary obtain access to this man, who has retired to this celebrated sanctuary, and who has in fact, renounced all human intercourse? And how shall one ray of light enter such a mind,—a mind stript of all the attributes connected with choice, or even with thought? Must not we pronounce this man’s case absolutely desolate; and that he is, in the very worst sense

* See Mr. Ward’s Farewell Letters.

of the apostolic declaration, '*without hope?*' A my venerable colleague, Dr. Carey, writes me, that man, through a Christian tract, in the Bengalee language, which some how or other was introduced into his hands, has given up his rank, the worship of his countrymen, and all his nothings, and is become a Christian, receiving Christian baptism. After conquests, who shall despair of India, or of Africa, or the North American wanderer? It was not our design then, that, connected with the command to preach the Gospel to every creature, our Lord used memorable words, '*All power is given unto me in heaven and upon earth.*'

"Now, Sir, these instances of conversion are put in India, where they have occurred, so that if they are not true, the enemies of Missions have a fair opportunity to injure the reputation of the Missionaries, by exhibiting them. But do they deny these facts?—No. What do they prove?—that Christianity, when attended with the power of God, triumphs with as much ease over idolatry of Hindostan, as over that of Otaheite; in every part of the world extending its influence, and increasing the number of its friends. 'In fact,' to the language of Mr. Ward,* 'a moral revolution as grand and important has taken place in British India within the last twenty years, than is, perhaps, found in all the annals of the church, the apostolic age excepted.—And still it spreads:' the translation of the Bible daily advancing; education is extending its operation in the most rapid manner, and converts from heathens are almost daily added to the Christian church, and these converts bring their books and their gods, and cast them to the moles and to the bats, and renounce their covenant with death. Christian villages composed wholly of native converts have been contemplated every thing indicates the approach of a vast change, the appearance of this spiritual desert; a change I promise to all the teeming millions of Asia."

* See Mr. Ward's Farewell Letters.

[No. 50.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

THE FAMILY OF THE HOLMES'S.



"The first few days were spent in fruitless efforts to obtain some situation,—his few shillings were expended,—the shadows of another gloomy night were stretching themselves over him, when he sat down on some stone steps, in front of a gentleman's house, to rest himself. While he sat there ruminating over the past scenes of his juvenile life, pleasing himself with the hope of seeing brighter and better days, a gentleman in a gig drove up to the door, and, as he was getting out, Henry rose and held the reins of the horse's bridle."

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1824.

THE FAMILY OF THE HOLMES'S:

"I have remarked to you in conversation, the effect of what has been called a **RULING PASSION**. When its object is noble, and an enlightened understanding directs its movements, it appears to me a great felicity; but whether its object be noble or not, it infallibly creates, where it exists in great force, that active and ardent constancy, which I describe as a capital feature of the decisive character. The subject of such a commanding passion, wonders, if indeed he were at leisure to wonder, at the persons who pretend to attach importance to an object which they make none but the most languid efforts to secure. The utmost powers of the man are constrained into the service of the favourite CAUSE by his passion, which sweeps away, as it advances, all the trivial objections and little opposing motives, and seems almost to open a way through impossibilities. This spirit comes on him in the morning as soon as he recovers his consciousness, and commands and impels him through the day with a power from which he could not emancipate himself if he would. When the force of habit is added, the determination becomes invincible, and seems to assume rank with the great laws of nature, making it nearly as certain that such a man will persist in his course, as that in the morning the sun will rise."

Foster.

MR. HOLMES was the second son of a very respectable farmer, who rented a small estate at Y——, in the county of W——. When a little boy he was very inquisitive, fond of mixing with his seniors and superiors, from whom he gained much information; and though there was no good school in the neighbourhood, yet by the assistance of the kind and amiable Clergyman, who was the Vicar of the parish, he acquired the rudiments of a useful education. That leisure time which other children usually devote to play, he gave to reading; and before he was fourteen, he was a very good accountant. He happened, when about nine years old, to read the popular story of Whittington and his Cat, and such was the deep and powerful impression it made on his mind, that it became the perpetual subject of his conversation; and he would often amuse the other members of his family with some visionary tales of his future eminence. He would often say to his brothers, "I will leave *you* to feed cows, and pigs, and horses, and turn up the clods of the field, but when I am a man, I will go to London, and see if I cannot become as great a man as Whittington." So completely had this

passion gained an ascendancy over him, that he would often walk the distance of a mile and a half to see the mail coach pass along the road towards the far-famed city; and after listening to the sound of the horn, with an extacy of delight, which no other notes could equal, he would return home to talk and to dream of his future adventures.

When about the age of fifteen his father died, leaving a large family unprovided for, and as Henry could not consent to remain any longer at home, his mother gave him a guinea and a few shillings, and he set off to seek his fortune. His youthful ardour kindled into rapture when he first saw the dome of St. Paul's towering at a distance; and though he would occasionally shed the tributary tear of affection at the remembrance of the living, and of the dead of his own native village, yet he was so absorbed in the visions of his own creative fancy, that he was rarely depressed. The first few days were spent in fruitless efforts to obtain some situation—his few shillings were expended—the shadows of another gloomy night were stretching themselves over him, when he sat down on some stone steps, in front of a gentleman's house to rest himself. While he sat there ruminating over the past scenes of his juvenile life—pleasing himself with the hope of seeing brighter and better days, a gentleman in a gig drove up to the door, and as he was getting out Henry rose and held the reins of the horse's bridle. The quickness of his movements, and his fine ruddy countenance, which usually wore a most fascinating smile, attracted the notice of Mr. Lucas, who asked him his name and the place of his residence. "My name, Sir, is Henry Holmes," he replied, "I was born at Y——, in the county of W——; my father was a farmer, and he is just dead, and as I did not like to stay at home to be a burden to my mother, who has a large family to bring up, I left home last Monday, to see if I could get a place in London, and if you will hire me, Sir, I will try to please you." This simple tale, told in the most artless style, made its way to the heart of Mr. Lucas, who said, "How long have you been in London?" "Three days, Sir, but I have not been able to get any work." "Have you any money?" "Yes, Sir, I have a guinea which Mother

gave me when I left home, but I am afraid to change it, for if I do all my money will soon be gone." This circumstance gave Mr. L. such an high opinion of Henry's carefulness of disposition, that he immediately resolved to take him into his service; and having obtained the name of the benevolent Vicar of Y——, he wrote to him, and within the space of a few days, he received an answer which confirmed the truth of the statement he had received; and which at the same time bore an honourable testimony to the fidelity and industry of the adventurous youth.

Mr. Lucas was a grocer, who lived in F—— Street, and having acquired a handsome fortune by his trade, like most of the wealthy citizens, he had his country-house, where he spent the summer months. He generally came to business in the morning, and returned about four o'clock; and as his groom had just left him, he took Henry with him to supply his place. He had to clean the horse and gig—the knives and shoes—and look after some choice poultry; and such was the attention he paid to his work, and the kindness, and amiability of his temper and disposition, that he soon gained the esteem of the whole family. He continued with the family till they returned to town for the winter, when he accompanied them; and as he possessed talents which fitted him for a higher situation, his master took him into the shop, where he distinguished himself by his assiduity and attention to business. No one was cleaner in his person, or neater in his dress; no one was more obliging in his disposition; the rusticity of his appearance soon gave way to the polish of refined manners; his punctuality and habit of dispatch became proverbial; and though his temper was hasty and irritable, yet he kept it in a state of subjection; and uniformly displayed a union of excellence, which is but rarely found in one person.

Such is the precarious tenure on which men hold their reputation under this mysterious dispensation of Providence, that it is often endangered no less by their virtues, than their vices; and those who at one period are esteemed and admired by the wise and the good, are plunged into the depth of infamy by the malignant cruelty of the wicked. Thus it was with Henry. There were

two belonging to the establishment, his seniors in age, and superiors in rank, who became jealous of him; and as they could not shake the stability of his character by any just accusations, they resolved to destroy it by artifice. One of them had the care of the till-drawer, and for several succeeding evenings he complained to the head shopman of having missed some money; when it was arranged between them, that the drawer should be emptied at an earlier hour, and some marked money put into it. This was done, and at nine o'clock the money was counted, and there was no less than five shillings and sixpence missing. This report was immediately taken to Mr. Lucas, who called them all into the counting-house, and having stated the fact, he proposed that every one should consent to have his person, and his boxes searched, without being permitted to leave the room except for that purpose. This proposal gave entire satisfaction, and they drew lots to determine the exact order in which the search should be conducted. The first name drawn was the head shopman, who immediately gave up all his keys to Mr. Lucas, and underwent the strictest examination, but he was pronounced innocent—the second was the man who had the care of the till, and he was pronounced innocent—the third was Henry Holmes, who, after being searched, said, "My box, Sir, is not locked." On Mr. Lucas's return, he looked stedfastly in Henry's face, and said, "I certainly did not suspect you Henry, but I have found the money in your box, (producing it), and as you have given me such a proof of your ingratitude and perfidy, you shall leave my house to-morrow morning." "Sir," said Henry, "in a firm tone, I am innocent. Some one has placed the money in my box, which might be very easily done, as I scarcely ever lock it." "I have suspected you for a long time," said one of the shopmen, "for no one is so likely to be guilty of fraud, as he who overacts the part of virtue."

Mr. Lucas now withdrew into the parlour, when he related the whole occurrence, and as soon as Mrs. Lucas had heard the accusation of the shopman, she said, "Henry is innocent. He is the victim of another's guilt, and some plan must be adopted to detect the culprit. In my opinion the accuser is the culprit, or he is

an accomplice. Is it fair to presume that he who stole the last sum, stole the preceding sums that have been lost? how then will you account for finding only the five shillings and sixpence?" "It is impossible," said *Miss Lucas*, "that Henry can be the thief. We never lost any thing when he was with us at the villa, and we know that he does not go out to scenes of amusement like some of the others, and therefore he is under less temptation to extravagance than they are. There is a plot to effect his ruin, which I hope will be discovered." While they were talking, the housemaid entered the parlour, and said, that she had just overheard two of the young men talking together on the subject, and she distinctly heard one say to the other, "It was well planned, and well executed, and now we shall get rid of him." She was requested to take no notice of what she had heard, but to act as though she really believed that Henry was guilty. As these two young men slept together, Mr. Lucas cautiously removed some tea chests which stood against a thin partition that separated their bed-room from an upper warehouse, and having placed himself near an aperture in one of the boards, he waited there till they retired to rest. Having, from their own conversation, received a full conviction of their guilt, he silently withdrew, and informed his wife and daughter that he was perfectly satisfied of Henry's innocence.

The next morning he rose rather earlier than usual, and before the porter had opened the shop, he summoned all into his presence, and charged these two men, first, with the crime of stealing the money, and then with the still baser crime of involving an innocent person in the guilt of their transgression. This unexpected charge—the indignant firmness with which it was brought—the involuntary movement of Henry, who came forward to look his accusers in the face, confounded and abashed them; and though they each made some faint efforts to deny it, yet when Mr. Lucas repeated the conversation which he had overheard the preceding night, and threatened that if they did not immediately acknowledge their guilt, and solicit Henry's forgiveness, he would send for the police, they made a full confession, and implored mercy in the most suppli-

ant manner. Henry forgave them, and interceded for them; but Mr. Lucas would not consent that such men should remain in his service, and having paid them their arrears of wages, he discharged them.

This plot which was laid to effect his ruin, led to his advancement, and he gradually rose step after step, till he became the most responsible servant belonging to the establishment.

We often see tradesmen, when they have amassed a large fortune, affecting contempt for that rank of life in which they have moved, discovering at the same time a strong anxiety that their children, especially their daughters, should form alliances with those who move in the higher and more dignified circles. Hence they will often sacrifice a daughter at the shrine of their vanity, and give a large portion of that wealth which their own industry has accumulated, to some titled pauper, whose extravagance first reduces her to beggary, and whose unkindness breaks her heart. But Mr. Lucas was a wise man. He never rose in feeling or in expectation above the level of his profession. He had but one child, and he wished to see her happy; and when he perceived that there was a mutual regard subsisting between her and Henry, he expressed his entire approbation, and they were married. On this event taking place, Mr. Lucas retired from business, and at his decease, which happened about twelve months after Mrs. Lucas's, he left the greater part of his property to Mr. Holmes.

Mr. Holmes, who had risen by the divine blessing on the force of his own industry, from indigence to affluence, from a low degree of obscurity to considerable eminence, would often allude in conversation to his original condition, and exhibit his guinea as a proud memorial of his former poverty; thus rebuking by his example, the pride of many of our modern Croesus's, who are no less anxious to conceal from others their origin, than they are to display their vanity. He had a large family, and as he had taken considerable pains with the education of his children, and set before them an example worthy their imitation, he had the pleasure of seeing them growing up into life, esteemed and respected, bidding fair to be the ornaments of a future generation. His

two eldest sons were in partnership with him, his youngest was walking the hospitals—he had one daughter married to a farmer, who resided in his native county, and three still living with him. He had long resisted the importunity of his children to take some country residence, that they might enjoy the occasional retreat from the noise, and smoke, and bustle of the city; but, when the mother urged the measure, it was adopted, as he was no less anxious to gratify her wishes, than she was to avoid the indulgence of improper ones.

After many unsuccessful efforts to obtain an eligible situation, he purchased a small estate in the vicinity of —, about seven miles from London, where he erected a neat, yet commodious mansion, and having two sons who were competent to the management of his business, he retired from the more active, and laborious duties of it, to spend the evening of his days amidst those rural scenes, with which his earliest and deepest impressions were associated. Having been accustomed when a child to attend his parish church, on the Sabbath, he regularly observed the practice through life; and though for many years he had no clear perceptions of the nature, or the design of the gospel, yet soon after the settlement of the Rev. Mr. Newton at St. Mary Woolnoth, he began to feel its enlightening and purifying influence. At first he disliked his style of preaching, and the pride of his heart rose up in high disdain against that plan of salvation which required the man of virtue to implore mercy in terms as humiliating as those which publicans and harlots employ; but his prejudices gradually subsided as his knowledge increased, and though he could not remember any specific time when the great moral change was produced, by which he passed from death unto life, yet he uniformly spoke of it as the most important and blissful event of his history.

The renovation which the grace of God effects in the human character, often leaves the ruling passion to retain its ascendancy over the mind, while it simply gives *it a new direction*; and he who undergoes it, usually displays the same bold decision, or hesitating precaution—the same degree of native ardour, or lethargic supineness

—the same spirit of fearless courage, or palpitating timidity in his religious profession, that he has been accustomed to display in his civil avocations: but on some occasions it is just the reverse, and we see the avowed infidel when convinced of the truth of the gospel, halting as between two opinions—the active tradesman, who keeps the machinery of a large and complicated concern in a brisk and constant motion, a lukewarm Christian—and the man who could face the most appalling dangers, without suffering a muscle to be distorted, discovering an effeminate fearfulness of spirit, when his obligations to a life of practical devotedness to God, are pressed upon his attention. To account for such a moral phenomenon would be absolutely impossible, unless we advert to the superior influence which sensible objects are known to possess over the mind, during that period in the religious experience of a Christian, when his faith in the divine testimony, and powers of the world to come, is weak and defective; but as that great moral principle increases in strength and animation, the natural dispositions recover their native tone and vigour—the mind no more vacillates—but rising to a full and plenary conviction of the superior value of the things which are unseen, and eternal, gives to them its supreme attention and affection.

Mr. Holmes felt the transforming power of the truth soon after his marriage, which led him to the adoption of religious habits and customs; but he was too deeply involved in the cares and perplexities of business to become an eminent Christian. His moral character was unimpeachable, and he brought the general principles of religion to regulate his conduct in the ordinary transactions of life; but his heart was too much in the world; the fervour of his devotional spirit bore no just proportion to his diligence in business; and he was less anxious for the higher and more distinctive attainments of his faith, than the acquisition of wealth. He regularly attended the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Newton on the Sabbath-day; but that ministry was more frequently the word of reproof than consolation; and though the hope of a blissful immortality would sometimes dawn upon him, yet it shone with too feeble a ray to afford him entire satisfaction; as it is wisely or-

dained that a full assurance of eternal life shall be imparted only to those who give *diligence* to make their calling and election sure.

Mrs. Holmes was certainly more devout than her husband, and devoted a larger proportion of her time to reading and meditation; but her associations were unfavourable to the growth of her piety, which, though sincere, was too much tinged with superstition. She thought more of her duties than her privileges—of her defects than of Him who came to repair them—placed more dependence on prayer and watchfulness than the blood of sprinkling; and, while she did not doubt the truth of the promises, she uniformly gave a more implicit assent to the threatenings of the Sacred Volume. “She was rather a disciple of the mortified Baptist than of the merciful Redeemer. Her devotions were sincere, but discouraging. They consisted much in contrition, but little in praise—much in sorrow for sin, but little in hope of its pardon. She did not sufficiently cast her care and confidence on the great propitiation. She firmly believed all that her Saviour had done and suffered for sinners, but she could not claim for her own enjoyment the benefits resulting from his mission and death. While she was painfully working out her salvation with fear and trembling, she indulged the most unfounded apprehensions of the divine displeasure.”

No circumstance gave them so much uneasiness, on their removal to —, as the loss of that ministry under which they had been brought to feel the power of the truth; especially as the vicar of the parish was decidedly opposed to evangelical sentiments. However they thought it their duty to go to church; and probably they would have continued to go much longer, had it not been for an occurrence which was no less gratifying and important than it was unexpected. The junior branches of the family, though amiable and intelligent, made no profession of religion; and to them this exchange of a faithful ministry, which carried the sentence of condemnation against all, for one which flattered the pride of the human heart by extolling its virtues, was very acceptable. Hitherto they had revered religion, and held in high estimation those

who possessed it; but now they began to speak of it in a style which indicated some essential change in the moral disposition of the heart, and occasionally made some efforts towards an approximation to the customs of the fashionable circles around them, which excited the fears of their pious parents. An intimate female friend, who had seen this change in the religious habits of the young people, took an opportunity, when on a visit at the Elms, to introduce the subject to Miss Holmes, who did not attempt to justify what her conscience condemned, but said *that she was much obliged for this fresh proof of her friend's kind concern for her best interest.* "Indeed," she remarked, "the world abounds with evil, but no one is so fascinating, nor so pernicious as irreligious society; and this is the only society which we now enjoy; which, I fear, will prove destructive of all those good impressions which we have at times received under the ministry of the venerable Newton. His appeals operated as a check and as a restraint on the evil tendencies of our nature; but now we are allured into the paths of temptation, by being told from the pulpit that we ought to see life, and have free access to all its scenes and sources of pleasure and amusement. Our excursion to Dawlish will take us away from the scene of danger; and I hope on our return we shall have resolution enough to withstand every enticement to evil which will prove at all injurious to our religious habits." On taking leave of Miss Holmes her friend presented her with a copy of Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul;" which she said she had read, but promised to peruse it again, as a compliment to the kindness which had dictated the present.

Her two sisters, Emma and Jane, were several years younger than herself. They bore some resemblance to each other in the general outlines of their character, but materially differed in some of its more prominent features; and as they had just finished their education in a school, where all the accomplishments could be acquired, except the one most essential to human happiness, they felt themselves in their native element when moving in the circles of gaiety and folly. Emma was the finest figure, but Jane possessed the finest

mind. The former excelled in the gracefulness of her manners, the latter in the sweetness of her disposition; and while Emma was rather too fond of display, there was an unobtrusive modesty about Jane which inclined her to conceal the most attractive charms of her character. Emma was most admired by strangers, but Jane was most beloved by their friends. Emma excited most envy amongst her associates, Jane the most respect. Emma appeared to most advantage in a large party, where she moved, and spoke as though she were the presiding spirit of the scene; Jane in a select circle, where the interchange of thought could take place without being subjected to those interruptions and breaks, which a promiscuous throng invariably occasions. Emma was by far the most keen and satirical; but Jane surpassed most of her own age in that practical good sense which is far more valuable than all the artificial polish that can be given to the manners or the dispositions. But though they so materially differed in some of the more prominent features of their character, yet they were passionately fond of each other; and such was the degree of respect and attachment which they felt for their parents, and their brothers and sisters, that they were willing, either by sacrifice or exertion—by the suppression of opinion, or display of principle, to do all in their power towards the preservation and increase of domestic happiness.

As Mr. Holmes had applied himself to the toils of business with unremitting constancy for so many years, and had accumulated a large fortune, he resolved, now the evening of life had set in, to rest himself from his labours, and indulge himself and family with a few excursions into different parts of the kingdom; which might prove no less beneficial to their health, than gratifying to their feelings. After long consultations amongst themselves and a few friends, who had visited the different resorts of fashionable retreat, they fixed on a tour through the West of England, intending to spend the autumn at Dawlish in Devonshire, if they liked the place. Here it was that Miss Louisa Holmes was first introduced to Miss Roscoe, when an intimacy was formed which in future years grew to the most mature friendship, and proved a source of mutual pleasure and improvement.

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THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

ON NEGRO SLAVERY.

PART I.



"The back is made bare, and the offender is placed on the ground, the hands and feet being firmly held, and extended by other slaves; when the driver, with his long and heavy whip, inflicts, under the eye of the overseer, the number of lashes which he may order; each lash, when the skin is tender, and not rendered callous by repeated punishments, making an incision in the flesh, and thirty or forty such lashes will leave it in a dreadfully lacerated and bleeding state." page 8.

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1824.

ON NEGRO SLAVERY.

PART I.

“My ear is pain’d,
My soul is sick, with every day’s report
Of wrong and outrage, with which earth is filled.
There is no flesh in man’s obdurate heart,
It does not feel for man; the natural bond
Of brotherhood is sever’d, as the flax
That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
Not coloured like his own; and having power
To enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
Dooms and devotes him as a lawful prey. *Cowper.*

THOUGH I am less disposed to ramble about the streets of the Metropolis than through the fields, and lanes, and woods of the country, yet I cannot sit in one room the whole of the day, contenting myself by gazing on the people who may pass and repass before my eye. The same roving disposition which often took me abroad amongst the captivating scenes of rural life, impelled me, when in the great city, to walk out, and view its wonders. Of course I paid my first visit to St. Paul’s; from thence I went to Guildhall; and terminated my morning’s peregrination at the Monument. I was pleased with what I had seen, but I was soon convinced that my taste was not formed for such scenes of gratification; and should have hastily resolved to return to the country, had I not anticipated superior enjoyment from the society of my friends. I now hastened to Mr. Llewellyn, who had engaged to accompany me to Mr. Wilcox’s at H—, where we dined with a select party. After the cloth was removed, and the ladies had retired into an adjoining,

parlour, we entered on the discussion of an important question, which rose out of a remark that very accidentally fell from my lips. Peter, the emancipated Negro, waited at table, and seemed anxious, (as I thought,) by his attentions, and the gracefulness of his manners, to redeem the character of his countrymen from a portion of that odium which is so unjustly cast upon them. "You have," I observed to Mr. Wilcox, "a Negro who possesses a very superior mind; and from some conversation which I had with him the other morning, I judge he is not altogether ignorant of the Christian Religion."

Mr. Wilcox. "Yes, Sir, Peter does possess a very superior mind. His thirst for improvement is never satisfied. He has acquired a very extensive share of information on a variety of subjects, and he will often conduct a discussion with great facility and accuracy of reasoning."

Mr. Llewellyn. "It was an opinion some once entertained, that the Africans are an inferior race of beings to the Europeans; and on this basis they rested one of their arguments to justify their conduct in reducing them to a state of slavery. But instances of genius, and of improvement, and of skill in the mechanical arts, have been displayed in modern, as well as in ancient times, sufficiently strong to destroy this absurd notion. Africa has given birth to divines, heroes, and poets,* who would sustain no loss of reputation on a comparison with the celebrated men of other countries; and if in the present day her sons do not distinguish themselves in the republic of letters, yet this must be attributed more to their bad education, the influence of their tyrannical governments, and their unsettled state, than to any original inferiority of mind. Give to them the civil and religious rites, and customs, and privileges which we enjoy, and in process of time, I have no doubt, they will raise their country as high in the scale of excellence as our own."

"Some few," said a *Mr. Foster*, a West India mer-

* Africa has produced several distinguished persons; among whom we may enumerate Cyprian, Augustin, and Tertullian in the class of divines—Hannibal and Asdrubal in the list of heroes—Terence among the poets, and many others.

chant, who was one of our party, "may discover genius, and may be disposed to embrace the Christian religion; but I am decidedly of opinion that, as a people, they are inferior in strength and vigour of intellect to Europeans; while, at the same time, I must confess that they are adepts at roguery and lying; nor do I believe that they are susceptible of the social virtues."

Mr. Llewellyn. "If they are addicted to these crimes, I believe they have imbibed them from their intercourse with us. I remember, Mr. Towne, who had travelled several hundred miles up the country, when examined by the Committee of the House of Commons, said, 'The natives of Africa are hospitable, kind, and ready at learning languages; that in the inland country they are innocent, but on the coast their intercourse with Europeans has made them adepts in roguery, and taught them to plunder, and pick up one another to sell.' Lieutenant Dalrymple stated, 'That in natural capacity the Africans equal any people whatever; that if they had a better market for their produce, they would be as industrious as any Europeans; for where there is no slave trade, they were very industrious, manufacturing cotton cloth, working in gold, silver, and iron, and also in wood and leather, making saddles, bow cases, and other articles.' They are represented by some as a sullen, unsocial, and malignant race of human beings, who are sunk so low in degeneracy that no efforts can raise them to a level with the inhabitants of other countries; but such charges are not substantiated by the testimony of impartial travellers. The celebrated Park* speaks of them as 'attached to

* On one occasion, being exhausted by fatigue and hunger, he was preparing to lodge himself in the branches of a tree, when a woman, who was returning from the labours of the field, invited him to her hut, where he received every attention which he needed. "The female part of the family," says Mr. P. "lightened their labour by songs; one of which was composed extempore on myself, and sung by one of the young women, the rest joining in a sort of chorus. The words, literally translated, were these;—'The winds roared, and the rains fell. The poor white man, faint and weary, came and sat under our tree. He has no mother to bring him milk, no wife to grind him corn, Chorus.—Let us pity the white man; no mother has he,' &c. &c." These words have since been formed into verse, and set to music:—

their country—gentle and benevolent in their dispositions—ingenious and industrious. During a wearisome peregrination of more than five hundred British miles, exposed to the burning rays of a tropical sun, these poor slaves, he says, amidst their own infinitely greater sufferings, would commiserate mine; and frequently of their own accord bring water to quench my thirst, and at night collect branches and leaves to prepare me a bed in the wilderness.”

“Africa,” I remarked, “is a fine country; and if Great Britain had done as much to diffuse the principles of justice and humanity amongst her population, as she has to encourage barbarism; if she had expended half as much of her capital to promote her civilization, as she has to check her progress in improvement, she would have been, ere this, one of the most powerful nations of the earth. Instead of being a stain on the humanity and honour of the English people, she would have been, from her commerce with us, a mine of wealth to our manufactories, richer than any which Spain ever possessed in South America.”

Mr. Foster. “Well, Sir, you have obtained the abolition of the slave trade, which you imagined stood in the way, like some evil genius, to prevent her march of improvement; but though that evil spirit has been laid nearly twenty years, what progress has she made?”

“The loud wind roar’d, the rain fell fast;
The white man yielded to the blast
He sat him down beneath our tree;
For weary, sad, and faint was he;
And ah! no wife or mother’s care,
For him the milk or corn prepare.

CHORUS.

*The white man shall our pity share,
Alas! no wife or mother’s care,
For him the milk or corn prepare.*

“The storm is o’er, the tempest past,
And Mercy’s voice has hush’d the blast;
The wind is heard in whispers low:
The white man far away must go;
But ever in his heart will bear
Remembrance of the Negro’s care.

CHORUS.

*Go, white man, go; but with thee bear
The Negro’s wish, the Negro’s prayer—
Remembrance of the Negro’s care.”*

"We, Sir," I replied, "have abolished the slave trade, as far as a legal enactment can extend, but the unjust and inhuman commerce is still carried on; and if it is not pushed to such a destructive extent as formerly, yet it perpetuates those evils which it originated. Indeed it is my opinion, that the slave trade will continue as long as slavery does. They are twin vices, that live and grow together; nor will one die without the other. We wiped off one deep stain from our national character, when we voted the abolition of the slave trade; and I hope there is virtue enough left in the British Parliament to wipe away another blot, by abolishing slavery throughout the whole of the British dominions."

Mr. Foster. "The abolition of slavery in the West Indies is a measure which some of the good people of England are very anxious to carry into effect; but in my opinion they are governed more by their feelings than their judgment. Those feelings which are strongly excited by gloomy and exaggerated descriptions of individual instances of atrocity and barbarity, are honourable to their character; but if we suffer ourselves to be guided by feelings alone in relation to this most important question, we may take a step that will prove no less injurious to the welfare of the slaves than destructive of our own interest. The slaves, I grant, may not possess such a large portion of personal and domestic comfort as *we* enjoy; but it is my decided opinion that their condition is superior, in many respects, to that of most of the European peasantry. They are well clothed, well fed, and, I believe, generally treated with justice and kindness. And if it should be their fate to serve a hard master, they may appeal to the courts of law against his cruelties and oppressions, and obtain redress."

Mr. Llewellyn. "A man may be well fed, and well clothed, and he may be treated with kindness; *but if the fetters of bondage are fastened on him when he is guilty of no crime, we ought not to say that he is treated with justice.* What justice can there be in stealing an article? What justice in purchasing that article, knowing it to be stolen? or what justice in retaining that article when the owner comes to demand

it? 'None! And, Sir, you will permit me to ask, on what foundation does a West Indian planter rest his claim to the possession of his slave, but that of fraud? He bought him, it is true; but he knew, when he paid the purchase-money, that the poor unprotected Negro was stolen from his country—from his home—from his friends—from all the endearments of social life. Can a claim which is founded on fraud be an equitable one? No! *Justice, that pure justice* which requires us to do to others as we wish others to do to us, requires that the stolen Negro be given up to his rightful owner. And who is that? Himself.

But suppose this poor slave, who has been stolen from his own country, and transported to the West Indies, where he is deprived of his liberty, and made to labour under the lash of the torturous whip, has a chance of regaining his freedom by running away, has he not a moral right to do it? You will admit, I have no doubt, that he might have escaped, if he could, from the man who seized him in his own country; and might have escaped, if he could, in passing from the place where he was first taken to the ship which was to convey him to the land of bondage. He then possessed the right of escape, even after he became a slave; and does he not still possess that right? Unquestionably. But if he dare to exercise it in the West Indies;—if he dare turn his back on slavery, and set his face towards the land of freedom, and be taken, he is—what?—I can hardly give utterance to the horrifying fact—he is either hung, or unmercifully flogged. That is, you purchase men, whom you know to be stolen; and if they make an effort to regain their freedom, you either take away their life, or inflict, if possible, a greater torture. Is this treating them *justly*? Suppose a crew from an Algerine vessel were to put on shore on the coast of Essex, and seize an Englishman, and then transport him to their own country, and sell him into slavery. Suppose, after enduring the most severe punishments, he should have a prospect of making his escape. He does it; but before he gets beyond the reach of his cruel master, he is caught—conducted back to his former place of ignominy and suffering, and then executed as a common felon, or whipped till his flesh is

cut from his bones; should we in this kingdom call this an act of justice?"

Mr. Foster. "Certainly it would not comport with our notions of justice; but it is necessary to enact such severe laws in the West Indies, in order to keep the slaves on the estates belonging to their owners."

"But, Sir, did not you say that the condition of the slaves is superior, in many respects, to that of most of the European peasantry? But is it necessary to pass such a law to compel our peasantry to work for the masters who employ them? Does not the existence of such laws prove that the slaves abhor their condition? and that, when a chance offers, they will rather run the risk of enduring the greatest sufferings, than continue in it. But why? if they do not regard the loss of their liberty, as we should regard the loss of ours, as an evil too great to be borne?"

Mr. Foster. "But, Sir, if they lose their liberty, they receive food, and raiment, and lodging, and kind treatment, both in the time of health, and in sickness, as a compensation; which, if they were not stirred up to discontent by the agents of the Abolitionists, they would deem an adequate recompense."

"But, Sir, did not this spirit of discontent exist before the friends of humanity in this kingdom began to exert their influence to effect the abolition of slavery? Then how can the discontent of the slaves be fairly attributed to *their* benevolent exertions in their favour? But you say they are treated kindly, both in health and in sickness. Let us look at the treatment which they receive, and then we shall see how far it is entitled to such an epithet of commendation. When the gangs turn out in the morning, and go to the field of labour, they always work under the terror of the whip, which is a very weighty and powerful instrument of punishment. The driver has it always in his hand, and drives the Negroes, men and women, without distinction, as he would drive horses or cattle in a team. If any of them come too late, or flag at their work, they are liable to be flogged; and if they commit any fault which the driver does not think proper to overlook, he has the power of prostrating them on the ground, (women as well as men,) causing them to be held firmly down by other Negroes,

who grasp the hands and legs of their prostrate companion, who is compelled to receive, on his bare body, as many lashes as the crime is supposed to have merited. An eye-witness states,* that he once saw a few old female Negroes come too late, and as they knew they were to be whipped, they threw themselves on the ground as soon as they came up to the driver, who inflicted the punishment! Is this, Sir, treating human beings kindly? More serious punishments are inflicted only by the authority of the *overseer*; and the mode of this infliction is usually the same as has been already described. Whether the offender be male or female, precisely the same course is pursued. The back is made bare, and the offender is placed on the ground, the hands and feet being firmly held, and extended by other slaves, when the driver, with his long and heavy whip, inflicts, under the eye of the overseer, the number of lashes which he may order; each lash, when the skin is tender, and not rendered callous by repeated punishments, making an incision in the flesh, and thirty or forty such lashes will leave it in a dreadfully lacerated and bleeding state.

"These punishments are inflicted by the overseer whenever he thinks them to have been deserved. He has no written rules to guide his conduct, nor are the occasions at all defined on which he may exercise the power of punishment. Its exercise is regulated wholly and solely by his own discretion. An act of neglect or of disobedience, or even *a look or a word* supposed to imply insolence, no less than desertion, or theft, or contumacy, may be thus punished; and they may be thus punished, without trial, and without appeal, at the mere pleasure and command of the overseer. Now, Sir, is not such a system as cruel as it is impolitic? and can we say that those poor unfortunate Negroes, who are compelled to live under it, are treated with kindness?"

Mr. Foster. "I admit, Sir, that there is too large a share of discretionary power intrusted both to the driver and the overseer; but, Sir, in the present state of things this cannot be avoided. They must be invested with authority, or they would not be obeyed; but if they

* Mr. Cooper.

should exceed the bounds of their authority, and maltreat a slave, he may go and lodge his complaint against them to the attorney of the estate, or to a magistrate, and no doubt he would obtain redress."

"Yes, Sir, he may go and lodge his complaint against his overseer, but what redress can he obtain? Mr. Cooper states, that a woman, for disobeying the orders of an overseer, was put into the stocks, and conceiving that she was punished wrongfully, she went and complained to the attorney of the estate. He, instead of affording her any redress, ordered her to be thrown down on the ground in the customary manner, and thirty-nine lashes were inflicted on her naked body; after which she was raised up, and immediately thrown down again, and received thirty-nine lashes more.

"The following instance of cruelty towards two females, will make an appeal to the feelings of the country which will not be easily resisted. Two women, who were pregnant, desired to quit the field during the heavy rains, on account of their pregnancy. The overseer would not permit them. They went to complain of this refusal to a magistrate, but were stopped in the way by a neighbouring overseer, and by him thrown into the stocks until he sent them back to their own overseer, who put them again into the stocks on their own estate, and had them flogged. Of this proceeding they complained to the attorney. The attorney was of opinion that the overseer had acted with undue severity, but he considered the women to have been highly to blame for *attempting to complain to the magistrate*; whereas, he said, they ought, in the first instance, to have complained to him."

Mr. Foster. "There are, I have no doubt, many circumstances which may induce the attorneys to take part with the overseer against the Negroes, and dismiss their complaints without affording that redress which they ought to receive; but still the courts of law are open to them, and there justice is administered with an impartial hand."

"The impartial administration of justice," I observed, "is one of the greatest blessings which any people can enjoy. It is a protection for the poor and dependent, against the oppressions of the rich and the powerful.

But, Sir, this blessing is not enjoyed by the Negroes in the West Indies. Oh no! They are exposed, in the field, to the torturous lash of cruelty; if they go and complain to the attorney, who ought to interpose on their behalf, they are sent back to their master without redress; and if they should run to the courts of law, and endeavour, by their tears, and moans, and lacerated parts, to move the pity of the bench, alas! they will soon find, that no pity sighs, that no compassion weeps for a poor Negro, and that justice, instead of avenging his wrongs, gives them the sanction of her authority. In an official letter, from Lieut. Col. Arthur to the Right Hon. Earl Bathurst, bearing date Oct. 7, 1820, we have the result of a trial which was instituted against an inhabitant for excessive cruelty towards a poor slave. 'The trial to which I allude,' says Col. Arthur, 'was instituted against a free woman of colour, named Duncannette Campbell, under a bench warrant, for punishing her slave, named Kitty, in an illegal, cruel, and severe manner, by chaining her, and repeatedly whipping her; and for confining her, for a considerable time, in the said chains, in the loft of her house.'

"As the sufferings of this poor slave deeply excited my commiseration, I made it a point to attend the court: the female slave appeared covered with wounds and stripes. The medical gentleman, who had examined her by order of the magistrates as soon as she was taken into custody, deposed: "I examined the slave Kitty, and observed the scores of several wounds, which appeared to have been recently inflicted with a whip, or cow-skin; they were chiefly upon the shoulders, but there was also a considerable number on the left arm, the neck, and face; those on the face had produced considerable swelling, and other symptoms of inflammation; one of the stripes had divided the ala of the left ear, another had wounded the left eye-ball; both eyes were much swelled and inflamed, and her whole countenance was so much disfigured that it was some time before I could recognize her."

"The police officer deposed: "On proceeding to the dwelling of Miss Duncannette Campbell, I found the slave Kitty at the foot of a bed, with a pair of hand-

cuffs on, and chained round the legs with a double padlock: the chain was bound so close that she could not stand nor move. I saw a cut also upon the left ear, and many stripes upon the back: her face, also, bore visible marks of whipping, and there was a bruise under her eye. I tried to lift her up, but she could not stand: she informed me that she had been in this situation for six weeks." In fact, every charge stated in the warrant was most fully proved.

"To deny the punishment which had been so cruelly inflicted was, of course, impossible; and therefore the only defence which the prisoner attempted to set up was, that the gentleman with whom she had cohabited and lived for many years, had instigated the slave to neglect her business, disobey her orders, and to behave with the greatest insubordination; *that the slave was her own property, and that therefore she had a right to punish her as she thought proper. The prisoner admitted, indeed voluntarily bore testimony to the uniform excellent conduct of the poor slave for many years; and stated, that the circumstance for which she had now chastised her was the only misconduct of which she had ever been guilty.*

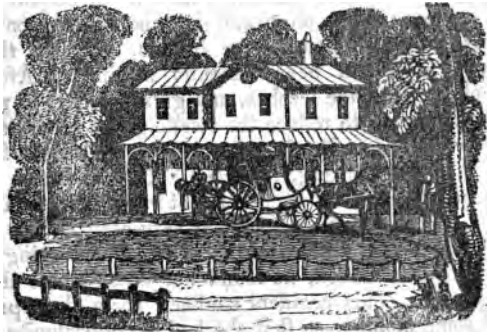
"The Bench, which was composed of four magistrates, in charging the jury, in no way whatever adverted to the dreadful instrument with which the punishment had been inflicted; to the poor slave's ear having been cut through; to the frightful blows on her face, or to the confinement in chains; (every part of which is illegal by the consolidated slave act of Jamaica, which is by the law professed to be acknowledged in the courts of this settlement, *although the act is not in the country.*) but briefly observed, that *by law every owner was justified in punishing to the extent of thirty-nine lashes;* and therefore the only point for the consideration of the jury was, Whether a greater number of lashes had been inflicted in the present case? WITHOUT FIVE MINUTES' HESITATION THE PRISONER WAS ACQUITTED!!"

[No. 52.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

MISS HOLMES.

PART I.



“On the return of the family to the Elms, an accident befel Miss Holmes that brought after it a train of consequences which no human sagacity could foresee. As she was stepping out of the chaise the horses suddenly moved forwards, by which her foot got entangled between the step and the wheel, and she was very much injured.” Page 2.

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1821.

MISS HOLMES.

PART I.

“ ————— The hour
when, in its second, best nativity,
My soul was born again through grace, this heart
Died to the world.” *Southey.*

ON the return of the family to the Elms, an accident befel Miss Holmes that brought after it a train of consequences which no human sagacity could foresee. As she was stepping out of the chaise the horses suddenly moved forwards, by which her foot got entangled between the step and the wheel, and she was very much injured. A messenger was immediately dispatched for a surgeon; who, on examining the bruised parts, reported that no bones were broken, but said that the ancle joint had been violently strained. After the application of the leeches, and giving orders to prepare a fomentation to reduce the swelling, he requested that she would immediately retire to rest; and if she felt any pain in the morning, he desired that she would not attempt to walk, but keep her foot in an horizontal position, promising to call on her very early. She passed through a very restless night, and in the morning, when the surgeon called, he found her much worse than he expected. This accident confined her a close prisoner for some months, so that she had no opportunity of renewing that intimacy with her gay associates which had been interrupted by their excursion to Devonshire. Some called, and left their cards of inquiry; but a sick chamber possesses no attractions for the votaries of pleasure, who usually shun it for the gayer exhibitions of life.

As she usually enjoyed a great flow of spirits, and was rather volatile in her disposition—more fond of the pleasures of society than the pleasures of meditation—she was very depressed and irritable during the first few weeks of her confinement, often censuring, in very strong terms, the inattention of the servant in leaving the horses; but she gradually became more reconciled to her state, and at length turned her attention to reading, to divert her mind, and beguile away the te-

dious hours of painful solitude. She would have preferred some of the popular tales and novels of the day to any of the volumes in her father's library; but she had too much regard for his authority and his feelings, to send for works which she knew would be displeasing to him.

It was in the afternoon of a day, when her parents and sisters went to dine with her brothers in London, that she sat alone—requesting the servant to bring her one book after another, which she closed almost as soon as she had read their respective title-pages,—that she thought of the present which her esteemed friend, Mrs. Loader, had made her, and of her promise to peruse it. As it was in her toilet, near which she was sitting, she took it out; and after turning over a few leaves she put it from her, saying, “I have read it;” but as she had pledged herself to read it again, she resolved to do it. She took the book once more—reluctantly, and carelessly read the running titles which are prefixed to its different chapters, till she came to the tenth, when her attention was imperceptibly arrested, and she perused it with a degree of interest which no other religious composition had ever excited.*

“Thus far have I often known convictions and impressions to arise, which, after all, have worn off again. Some unhappy circumstance of external temptation; ever joined by the inward reluctance of an unsanctified heart to the scheme of redemption, has been the ruin of multitudes. And, ‘through the deceitfulness of sin, they have been hardened,’ till they seem to have been ‘utterly destroyed, and that without remedy.’ And therefore, O thou immortal creature, who art now reading these lines, I beseech thee, that while affairs are in this critical situation, while there are these balancings of mind, between accepting and rejecting that glorious Gospel which I now lay before you, you will give me an attentive audience, while ‘I pray you in Christ’s stead that you would be reconciled to God.’

“One would indeed imagine, there should be no

* The author has transcribed nearly the whole of this chapter, and the subjoined prayer; as he conceives they will prove very acceptable to those of his readers who have not the original work.

need of importunity here. One would conclude, that as soon as perishing sinners are told that an offended God is ready to be reconciled, that he offers them a full pardon for all their aggravated sins; yea, that he is willing to adopt them into his family now, that he may at length admit them to his heavenly presence! all should, with the utmost readiness and pleasure, embrace so kind a message, and fall at his feet in speechless transports of astonishment, gratitude, and joy. But alas! we find it much otherwise. We see multitudes quite unmoved, and the impressions which are made on many more are feeble and transient. Lest it should be thus with you, O reader! let me urge the message with which I have the honour to be charged; let me intreat you to be reconciled to God, and to accept of pardon and salvation in the way in which it is so freely offered to you.

"I intreat you, 'by the majesty of that God in whose name I come,' whose voice fills all heaven with reverence and obedience. He speaks not in vain to legions of angels; but if there could be any contention among those blessed spirits, it would be, who should be first to execute his commands. Oh! let him not speak in vain to you! I intreat you, 'by the terrors of his wrath,' who could speak to you in thunder; who could, by one single act of his will, cut off this precarious life of yours, and send you down to hell. I beseech you by his tender mercies, which still yearn over you, as those of a parent over 'a dear son,' over a tender child, whom, notwithstanding his former ungrateful rebellion, 'he earnestly remembers still.' I intreat you, 'by all this paternal goodness,' that you do not compel him to lose the character of the gentle parent in that of the righteous Judge.

"I beseech you further, 'by the name and love of our dying Saviour.' I beseech you, by all the condescension of his incarnation, by that poverty to which he voluntarily submitted, 'that you might be enriched' with eternal treasures; by all the gracious invitations which he gave, which still sound in his word, and still coming, as it were, warm from his heart, are 'sweeter than honey, or the honey-comb.' I beseech you, by all his *glorious works* of power and of wonder, which were

also works of love. I beseech you, by the memory of the most benevolent person, and the most generous friend. I beseech you by the memory of what he suffered, as well as of what he said and did; by the agony which he endured in the garden, when his body was covered 'with a dew of blood.' I beseech you, by all that tender distress which he felt, when his dearest friends 'forsook him and fled,' and his blood-thirsty enemies dragged him away, like the meanest of slaves, and like the vilest of criminals. I beseech you, by the blows and bruises, by the stripes and lashes, which this injured Sovereign endured while in their rebellious hands; 'by the shame of spitting, from which he hid not that kind and venerable countenance.' I beseech you, 'by the purple robe, the sceptre of reed, and the crown of thorns which this King of Glory wore, that he might set us among the princes of heaven.' I beseech you, by the heavy burden of 'the cross,' under which he panted, and toiled, and fainted in the painful way 'to Golgotha,' that he might free us from the burden of our sins. I beseech you, by the remembrance of those rude nails that tore the veins and arteries, the nerves and tendons, of his sacred hands and feet; and by that invincible, that triumphant goodness, which, while the iron pierced his flesh, engaged him to cry out, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' I beseech you, by that unutterable anguish which he bore, when lifted up upon the cross, and extended there as on a rack for six painful hours, that you open your heart to those attractive influences which have 'drawn to him thousands, and ten thousands.' I beseech you by all that insult and derision which the 'Lord of Glory bore there;' by that parching thirst, which could hardly obtain the relief of 'vinegar;' by that doleful cry, so astonishing in the mouth of the only-begotten of the Father, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' I beseech you, by that grace that subdued and pardoned 'a dying malefactor;' by that compassion for sinners, by that compassion for you, which wrought in his heart long as its vital motion continued, and which ended not when 'he bowed his head, saying, It is finished, and gave up the ghost.' I beseech you, by the triumphs of that resurrection by which he

was 'declared to be the Son of God with power,' by the Spirit of holiness which wrought to accomplish it: by that gracious tenderness which attempered all those triumphs, when he said to her out of whom he had cast seven devils, concerning his disciples, who had treated him so basely, 'Go, tell my brethren, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God.' I beseech you, by that condescension with which he said to Thomas, when his unbelief had made such an unreasonable demand, 'Reach hither thy finger, and behold mine hands, and reach hither thine hand, and put it to my side; and be not faithless, but believing.' I beseech you, by that generous and faithful care of his people, which he carried up with him to the regions of glory, and which engaged him to send down 'his Spirit,' in the rich profusion of miraculous gifts, to spread the progress of his saving word. I beseech you, by that voice of sympathy and power, with which he said to Saul, while injuring his church, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' by that generous goodness, which spared the prostrate enemy when he lay trembling at his feet, and raised him to so high a dignity as to be 'not inferior to the very chiefest apostles.' I beseech you, by the memory of all that Christ hath already done, by the expectation of all he will farther do for his people. I beseech you, at once, by the sceptre of his grace, and by the sword of his justice, with which all his incorrigible 'enemies' shall be 'slain before him,' that you do not trifle away these precious moments, while his Spirit is thus breathing upon you; that you do not lose an opportunity which may never return, and on the improvement of which eternity depends.

"I beseech you, 'by all the bowels of compassion which you owe to the faithful ministers of Christ:' who are studying and labouring—preaching and praying—wearing out their time—exhausting their strength—and very probably shortening their lives, for the salvation of your soul, and of souls like yours. I beseech you, by the affection with which all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity long to see you brought back to him. I beseech you, by the friendship of the living, and by the memory of the dead; by the ruin of those *who have trifled away their days, and are perished in*

their sins, and the happiness of those who have embraced the Gospel, and are saved by it. I beseech you, by the great expectation of that important 'day, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven;' by 'the terrors of a dissolving world;' by the 'sound of the archangel's trumpet,' and of that infinitely more awful sentence, 'Come, ye blessed, and depart, ye cursed,' with which that grand solemnity shall close.

"I beseech you, finally, by your own precious and immortal soul; by the sure prospect of a dying bed, or of sudden surprize into the invisible state; and as you would feel one spark of comfort in your departing spirit when your flesh and your heart are failing. I beseech you, by your own personal appearance before the tribunal of Christ; (for a personal appearance it must be, even to those who now sit on thrones of their own;) by all the transports of the blessed, and by all the agonies of the damned, the one or the other of which must be your everlasting portion. I affectionately intreat and beseech you, in the strength of all these united considerations, as you will answer it to me, who may in that day be summoned to testify against you; and, which is unspeakably more, as you will answer it to your own conscience, as you will answer it to the eternal Judge; that you dismiss not these thoughts, these meditations, and these cares, till you have brought matters to a happy issue; till you have made a resolute choice of Christ, and his appointed way of salvation; and till you have solemnly devoted yourself to God in the bonds of an everlasting covenant.

"And thus I leave the matter before you, and before the Lord. I have told you my errand; I have discharged my embassy. Stronger arguments I cannot use; more endearing and more awful considerations I cannot suggest. Choose, therefore, whether you will go out as it were clothed in sackcloth, to cast yourself at the feet of him who now sends you these equitable and gracious terms of peace and pardon; or whether you will hold it out till he appears sword in hand, to reckon with you for your treasons and your crimes, and for this neglected embassy among the rest. Fain would I hope the best; nor can I believe that this labour of love *shall be entirely unsuccessful, that not one soul shall be*

brought to the foot of Christ in cordial submission and humble faith. 'Take with you,' therefore, 'words, and turn unto the Lord,' and say unto him, 'Take away all iniquity, and receive me graciously; so will I render the praise of my lips.'

The impression which this reading produced was such as she had never previously felt; a wound was inflicted in her heart which excited more joy than grief. She re-perused it; it disclosed new beauties; it sent forth a still stronger power of excitement. Her soul was alternately elevated and depressed—agonized and composed, as though she had no controul over its movements. She recalled to her remembrance those powerful, yet momentary impressions of truth, which she had experienced in former years, when sitting under the ministry of the venerable Newton; and trembled lest those under which she was now labouring should prove equally transient. It was this fearful apprehension which gave her more pain than a discovery of her moral danger; because she knew that there was salvation for the chief of sinners; but she knew that if these impressions left her they might never return. She arose from the couch of weariness and pain, and stood resting on the back of her chair, while she gave vent to her feelings in the following form of prayer.

"Blessed Lord, it is enough! it is too much! Surely there needs not this variety of argument, this opportunity of persuasion, to court me to be happy, to prevail on me to accept of pardon, of life, of eternal glory. Compassionate Saviour, my soul is subdued; so that I trust the language of my grief is become that of my submission, and I may say, 'My heart is melted like wax in the midst of my bowels.'

"O gracious Redeemer! I have already neglected thee too long. I have too often injured thee; have crucified thee afresh by my guilt and impenitence, as if I had taken pleasure in 'putting thee to an open shame.' But my heart now bows itself before thee in humble unfeigned submission. I desire to make no terms with thee but these,—that I may be entirely thine. I cheerfully present thee with a blank, intreating thee that thou wilt do me the honour to signify upon it what *is thy pleasure*. Teach me, O Lord, what thou wouldst

have me to do; for I desire to learn the lesson, and to learn it that I may practise it. If it be more than my feeble powers can answer, thou wilt, I hope, give me more strength; and in that strength will I serve thee. O receive a soul which thou hast made willing to be thine!

"No more, O blessed Jesus, no more is it necessary to beseech and intreat me. Permit me, rather, to address myself to thee with all the importunity of a perishing sinner, that, at length sees and knows 'there is salvation in no other.' Permit me now, Lord, to come and throw myself at thy feet, like a helpless outcast, that has no shelter but in thy generous compassion; like one 'pursued by the avenger of blood,' and seeking earnestly an admittance into the 'city of refuge.'"

"'I wait for the Lord; my soul doth wait; and in thy word do I hope,' that thou wilt 'receive me graciously.' My soul confides in thy goodness, and adores it. I adore the patience which has borne with me so long; and the grace that now makes me heartily willing to be thine; to be thine on thine own terms, thine on any terms. O secure this treacherous heart to thyself! O unite me to thee in such inseparable bonds, that none of the allurements of rank, or of fortune—none of the vanities of an ensnaring world—none of the solicitations of sinful companions, may draw me back from thee; and plunge me into new guilt and ruin! 'Be surety, O Lord, for thy servant for good,' that I may still keep my hold on thee; till at length I know more fully, by joyful and everlasting experience, how complete a Saviour thou art. Amen."

As she sat musing on the wondrous scene which had passed before her, adoring the long-suffering which had borne with her follies and her provocations, and the grace which had in such an unexpected manner invested the truth with such attractions, and such a power of impression; she was roused by the entrance of her Mamma into her room; "I hope my dear," said her Mamma, "you have spent a more pleasant day than you anticipated."—"I have been more free from pain than usual," she replied, "and upon the whole the hours have passed away agreeably, though I certainly felt my solitude to be irksome."

Most who feel the renewing influence of the truth, producing those moral effects on their taste and dispositions, which agree with the popular statements of the Scriptures, can, on looking back to the earlier periods of their history, recal to their remembrance excitements and tendencies of a religious nature, which, though very transient, were, while they continued, very powerful; giving to some text of Scripture, or some observation in a sermon, or some remark in conversation, a perpetual existence in their memory; and which must be considered as the first strivings of the Spirit of God within them. These sacred occurrences have served as the rallying point of hope, when the mind has been driven to the remotest distances from the faith of Christ; and notwithstanding the preference which has been given for a season to the pleasures of sin, there has been a secret inclination for those of righteousness; God having implanted a witness in the bosom who has never ceased to prophecy, though it may have been in sackcloth.

Miss Holmes, when about the age of twelve years, heard Mr. Newton make the following remark, when addressing himself to children: "You should treasure up in your memory, while you are young, all the religious knowledge which you can obtain, as it may be of great service to you at some future day, when it may please God to convert you. You will then, when convinced of sin, and awed by the terrors of the world to come, know how to obtain relief; which will keep you from that state of deep perplexity in which many are plunged, who are brought to see their danger while ignorant of the way of salvation."

This very judicious remark struck her with peculiar force, and ever afterwards she listened to the preaching of the Gospel, in anticipation of the benefit which she should derive from it when it should please God to convert her; and from that moment till the great change was produced, she lived in the constant expectation of it. Often, at different and distant periods, would she retire from the fascinations of the world, to pray for a new heart; and though she had urged her request till hope began to wane, yet she was never permitted to despair of obtaining the blessing. It is true, she was less importunate *after* she was deprived of the privilege of hearing

Mr. Newton, than when enjoying the benefits of his labours, and her new connexions and habits of pursuits had greatly diminished her anxiety for the one thing needful; but the early impression of its importance, which she had received, was too deeply imprinted in her heart ever to become obliterated; and though she often assumed a gay appearance, and wore the smile of animated delight, yet beneath these imposing symptoms of bliss, lay concealed a wounded, and at times an agonized mind. She would sometimes join in the satirical play of wit, on the eccentricities of professors, but always discountenanced any attack on the truth or sanctity of religion; and though in the new sphere in which she was moving, she was becoming more and more conformed to this world, yet she could not disengage herself from the ascendancy which the powers of the world to come had early acquired over her judgment and conscience. She had too much religion to be happy with the gay, and too little, to be happy with the pious; mingling with each, without being able to partake of their felicity, she was doomed to a life of perpetual mortification.

As her character usually received its peculiar tone and complexion from the last society with which she associated, it was perpetually varying from the gay to the grave, and from the grave to the gay; her spirits would occasionally rise to the highest elevation of mirth, and then sink to the lowest state of depression; sometimes open and cheerful in her disposition, at other times reserved and gloomy; alternately devoting herself to the pleasures of the world, and the external devotions of religion, with an eagerness which indicated their resistless attractions over her; nor was it till after she became a new creature in Christ Jesus, that her most intimate friends could ascertain the real cause of such an extraordinary changeableness in her character.

"I have no doubt," she remarked, in a letter to a friend, which was written subsequently to this event, "you were often astonished at that singular variation of manner and disposition, which was so often apparent in me; but if you had known the strange revulsions of feeling to which my poor unhappy mind was alternately exposed, you would have considered it as perfectly

natural. I am by nature a child of imitation—apt to catch the spirit and temper of those with whom I am in contact—easily led away by imposing manners—averse to all appearance of singularity—volatile and impetuous in my disposition; yet from the early age of twelve, so deeply and strongly impressed with the truth, and necessity, and excellence of personal religion, that I do not think I ever spent a day without giving to it a portion of my most serious attention. Hence, when carried away by the example of others, to scenes of gaiety and folly, my spirits would naturally rise to a high pitch of feeling; indeed, I was obliged to rise to a high point to enjoy any emotion of delight; but then, when I returned to my graver and more important subject of meditation and reflection, my soul was so abased and confounded—so deeply involved in distress—so terrified and alarmed in prospect of futurity, that I knew not how to endure the anguish I was doomed to suffer. I do not know that I can give a better description of the state of my mind, than by quoting the language of Dr. Watts, with a few slight alterations:—

‘I was a helpless captive sold,
Under the power of sin;
I could not do the good I would,
Nor keep my conscience clean.

‘My God, I cry’d with fervent breath,
For some kind power to save,
To break the yoke of sin and death,
And thus redeem the slave.’

“The charge which is often brought against religion, as tending to abridge our comforts, and induce a melancholy and dejection of spirit, I can repel from experience. Infallible truth declares, that her ways are ways of pleasantness, and her paths are paths of peace; and now I know, and feel it. My mind, which has been tossed about as on the conflicting elements of the natural and spiritual world, has now gained that haven of rest, where

‘Scarce a wave of trouble rolls
Across my peaceful breast.’”

[No. 53.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

MISS HOLMES.

PART II.



"It was when her Mamma was sitting with her on a Sabbath afternoon, after hearing a sermon at the church, which she very much disliked, that she made the first direct allusion to the recent exercise of her mind."

Page 10.

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1824.

MISS HOLMES.

PART II.

"In the first stages of religion, fear is apt to predominate over every other feeling and passion of the mind, because in that state, the sinner often discovers his danger, without becoming acquainted with his DELIVERER: he feels his chains, without seeing the *Angel of the covenant*, by whom they are to be broken. But after a time, he makes such large and bright discoveries of the goodness and love of God, that by degrees his bonds fall from him, and he exchanges trembling for hope, and disquietude for peace and joy. There is indeed, a salutary fear of *offending* the God he loves, which accompanies him through every stage of life. But this is as distinct from the fear by which he was once disquieted, as the terror of the slave is from the tender anxiety of the child." *Cunningham.*

THE impressions of truth on the human heart, when they are produced by a supernatural power, are deep and permanent; but when they claim no higher origin than the agency of man, they soon pass away like the morning cloud and early dew, and leave no trace of their existence behind. They may, during their continuance, keep the passions in a state of perpetual excitement, and induce an order of thought and reflection, and anticipation, in strict accordance with the general tenor of the Scriptures; but they effect no permanent change in the character. As they bear a resemblance when they are first received, and at successive periods, to the operations of the Spirit of the living God, they are often mistaken for them, and a profession of religion is made under their influence, which is abandoned as soon as they subside. Hence the annals of the Christian Church record the names of many who have outlived their avowed attachment to the faith of Christ; and the most awful passages of the sacred volume are denounced against those who *once pleaded* its promises, with the hope of obtaining *glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life.*

It was under a jealous apprehension of the transitory nature of her religious convictions, and feelings, that Miss Holmes formed a resolution to make no references to them, till by a process of trial she had acquired some satisfactory evidences of their permanency. She remembered an observation which she once heard the venerable Newton make, when preaching on the parable of the sower. "Genuine religion is distinguished from that which is spurious, not so much by the dissimilarity of its first impressions, as by its power to resist temptation, and to bring the dispositions of the heart into a subjection to the authority of Jesus Christ."

Her indisposition, though severe and protracted, was at no period considered to be dangerous;—it kept her away from those fascinating scenes to which she would otherwise have been exposed, and gave her an opportunity of devoting her attention more coolly and dispassionately to that subject which now began to appear pre-eminently interesting and important. She knew that her sins were more in number than she could calculate, and that the sentence of condemnation which stood recorded against her was just; but such was the strength of her faith in the efficacy of the Saviour's death, and the prevalence of his intercession, that she was *filled with all peace in believing, abounding in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost*. Her transition from a state of nature to a state of grace—from the pleasures of sense to those of faith—from the delusive charms of the visible, to the more attractive glories of the unseen world, was sudden and delightful, unattended by those deep and pungent convictions of guilt, and that overpowering apprehension of future woe, which sometimes torture and distract the mind of the young disciple. This was primarily owing to the accurate knowledge of the scheme of salvation which she had acquired by sitting under the enlightened ministry of Mr. Newton; for while it must not be concealed, that the beginning and consummation of personal religion in the heart, is to be attributed to the immediate influence of a supernatural power, it is equally evident that its progress in allaying that fear that produceth torment—in instilling that peace which passeth all understanding—and in elevating and *fixing the affections on things above*, is usually in pro-

portion to the accuracy and extent of the theological information which is possessed.

"Many," says an interesting writer, "are too prone to look for a conversion always uniform, not only in its effects, but in its operation, and too much bordering on the miraculous. The soul must be exceedingly terrified with fear—then overwhelmed with anguish—then plunged into despair—then suddenly filled with hope, and peace, and joy; and the person must be able to determine the day on which, and the sermon, or the paragraph, or the providence by which the change was wrought. But this is by no means necessarily, or generally the case; there is a variety in the temperaments and habits of men, and in the methods employed to bring them to repentance. We should remember that there are differences of administration, but the same Lord; that often he prefers to the earthquake, the wind, and the fire, the small still voice; that he can draw by the cords of love, and the bands of a man—that he can work as effectually by slow, as by instantaneous exertions—and that he may change the soul in a manner so gradual and mild, as to be scarcely discernible to any, but the glorious Author. And here we are furnished with evidence from analogy. In nature, some of God's works insensibly issue in others, and it is impossible for us to draw the line of distinction. The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. But who can ascertain which ray begins, or which ends the dawn? If you are unable to trace the progress of the divine life, judge by the result. When you perceive the effects of conversion, never question the cause. And if perplexed by a number of circumstantial inquiries, be satisfied if you are able to say, one thing I know, that whereas I was once blind, now I see."

The chastened seriousness of her spirit, and the new course of reading which she adopted, induced the family to suppose that she was taking a religious turn; though she cautiously abstained from making any direct communication as to the state of her mind. She felt fully convinced that some essential change had taken place—yet at times she doubted if it was any thing more than the effect of her own uninfluenced decision; and as she had more than once experienced a mental excitement

of a very similar nature, she rejoiced with trembling. She knew that the righteous hold on their way, and are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation; but as she was often perplexed when endeavouring to ascertain whether she belonged to that specific denomination of character, she could not anticipate the issue of her impressions with unmingled satisfaction. She felt a distaste for those objects of pursuit, and sources of gratification, which *had* acquired such a powerful ascendancy over her, and now longed to partake of the more refined enjoyment which results from communion with the members of the household of faith, and the public exercises of devotion; but she dreaded the prospect of coming into contact with the world, lest another revulsion of feeling should take place, which would leave her still more insensible than ever, to the unseen realities of eternity.

The Saviour, in his various offices, was now precious to her, as he is to all them that believe; she dwelt with holy awe and delight on that union of majesty and condescension—purity and compassion—justice and grace, which he displays in his mediatorial character; but she was apprehensive that when exposed to the rival influence of sensible objects, her mind would again be enslaved by their charms, and lose that exquisite susceptibility of impression from her new themes of contemplation and enjoyment, which no human power can ever produce.

Thus it is wisely ordained that, at every period in the experience of the Christian, there shall be some circumstance to perplex his judgment—some uncertainty to darken his prospect—some apprehension to disturb his peace—to convince him, that here perfect bliss can never be found; and that no attainments however high—that no excitements however delicate and strong—that no anticipations however bright and animating, are capable, while we are encompassed with infirmities, of yielding unmingled satisfaction and delight. In the following letter, which she addressed to her friend, Mrs. Loader, she made the first direct communication of the state of her mind, which I have no doubt will rescue her from the charges of precipitancy, or enthusiasm, which the *more fastidious* would venture to allege against her.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am much obliged by your affectionate epistle, which I received on the 10th, and I regret that you should deem any apology necessary for the introduction of that specific advice which it contained. My obvious indifference to the momentous question of personal religion; and my growing conformity to the customs and habits of the gay and the thoughtless around me, must I have no doubt, have been a source of considerable uneasiness and alarm to your susceptible mind; and I assure you, that it often plunged me into the deepest melancholy of spirit. I was often cheerful, but never happy; often trying fresh expedients to divert my attention from what I deemed *the gloomy subject*, but never could succeed; and though I became more insensible to the attractions of religion as I grew in years, yet I exposed myself more frequently to the keenness of its reproofs, and the awful solemnities of its threatenings. Those with whom I associated, who had not had the privilege of a pious education, could enjoy the world, and treat with levity the prohibitory injunctions of the sacred Scriptures, but I could not. I never could divest myself of the full conviction, that God has the first claim on the affections of the heart; and that he has appointed a day, when every human being *must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*. These thoughts would sometimes rush into my mind, not only when alone, but when in the midst of the most fascinating scenes; they would torture me, in the presence of the gayest mirth, and often compel me to deplore the hour I first yielded to temptation.

It was under the most agonizing mental conflict I ever sustained, that I hailed our tour to the West, as likely to dissolve that fatal charm by which I was subdued and enslaved; but I found on my return, that my *heart* had undergone no change, as I often secretly anticipated a re-entrance into that circle, against which my conscience often spoke in loudest accents. Our dear Mr. Newton once remarked, that as our dangers often *spring out of our conflicts*; so the greatest blessings

sometimes grow out of our heaviest afflictions. The correctness of this remark I can attest from experience. It was on our return from the West, where I had spent some of the happiest days of my life; and just as I was about to enter my father's house, that I met with that accident which has confined me a close prisoner for more than two months; but to that accident which I called fatal, I owe all my *present* felicity, and my prospect of future.

You express a hope that I have given the book which you so kindly presented to me, a candid perusal, presuming that no season can be more favourable for such subjects of inquiry, than those which we denominate afflictive. Yes, my dear friend, I have read it, though I felt such a reluctance to do so, that I put it far from me several times, and had not my word stood pledged, I had still been a stranger to its interesting contents. I read on carelessly till I came to the tenth chapter, when the subject fixed my attention, and I hope penetrated my heart. Then I *felt* that I was a sinner—then I *felt* that I stood solitary and alone, in the immediate presence of my legislator and my judge, confounded because righteously condemned—then I *felt* that I needed a Saviour. I have had many strong convictions of the truth and the necessity of religion in the earlier seasons of my life; but those which were produced on this occasion were more clear, and full, and powerful, than any that ever preceded them. They came, with an authority which I could not resist; they prevented all vacillation of mind; they constrained me with a force which I have no disposition to withstand, to yield to their influence; and though my evil heart of unbelief would sometimes suggest, that all is a delusion artfully practised on my imagination by Satan, who transforms himself into an angel of light: yet I can say, in reference to *Him*, who is the chief among ten thousand,—*Whom having not seen, I love; in whom, though now I see him not, yet believing, I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*

When, my dear friend, I received that present from your hand, I did not calculate on the effects which it was ordained to produce; for though I feel unworthy of the notice of the friend of sinners, yet, on reviewing the re-

cent change which has taken place in my sentiments, my taste and my feelings, I cannot avoid ascribing it to his sovereign and predetermined will.—The stanza which I have often sung with an air of indifference, now expresses the grateful feelings of my heart.

“Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God.”

But though I am fully convinced that a great change has been produced, yet I must not conceal from my friend, the dread I sometimes feel lest it should prove only a momentary excitement of the passions. I now can see the vanity of the world, but shall I when liberated from this state of confinement? I now can consecrate myself to the service of the Redeemer; but shall I have courage to take up the cross and follow him? It is not my province to dictate to infinite wisdom, nor prescribe the method by which my religious principles shall be tried; but it is my earnest, and my daily prayer to be kept within the walls of my solitary retreat, till *He* whose I am, and whom I wish to serve, has prepared me to resist every temptation by which I may be assailed, and to perform every duty which may devolve upon me.

No one of my family has any knowledge of the present state of my feelings, as I have cautiously abstained from making any allusion to religious subjects. Not because I am ashamed of religion, but because I am unwilling to make a premature profession; and though perhaps you may censure me for withholding from my dear parents, a communication which is so calculated to give them pleasure, yet if I should be permitted after having made such a communication, to relapse into my former course of gaiety and folly, the disappointment will be so great, that it may entail on them perpetual sorrow. As I am now approaching a crisis in my history—a crisis on which the final happiness, or misery of my immortal soul depends—a crisis which will give joy in heaven amongst the angels of light, or in hell amongst the angels of darkness, I hope you will pray for me. Pray that I may be kept in the evil hour—that *I may be enabled to walk circumspectly towards them that are without—that I may have courage to make a*

profession of my attachment to the Lord Jesus, and grace to adorn it; and at length be presented *faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.*

I need not say how acceptable another still longer epistle will be to me, but I certainly should prefer a personal interview, if you could make it convenient to pay us a visit. I am happy to inform you, that I am much better, and that all the rest of the family are well.

Your's affectionately,

LOUISA.

True piety will sometimes attempt to elude public notice, and endeavour to pass on towards the kingdom of heaven, unknowing and unknown; but every effort at concealment, merely serves to display its attractive charms of sincerity and humility. It does not act to be seen of men, nor speak to gain their applause; it seeks the shades of privacy, where it pants after communion with Him who seeth in secret; but though for a season it may remain unobserved, yet the fragrance of its spirit, and the lustre of its character will ultimately betray it. For the reasons which have been previously assigned, Miss Holmes had abstained from communicating to her family the change which had taken place in her sentiments and feelings; but she was not able to conceal from them the external proofs of it which her conduct and her occasional conversation necessarily supplied.—As *she* was reserved on the subject, so were her parents; and though they felt anxious to ascertain if her great seriousness of manners, was any thing more than a recurrence of her former deep depression of spirit, yet they knew not how to do it.

It often happens, that young persons can make a more free statement of their religious experience to strangers, or distant friends, than they can to their own parents; but this in general argues some essential defect in the habits of domestic economy. There may be, I grant, on the part of the child in the earlier stages of his experience, a reluctance to disclose to any one, "the secret movements and operations of his heart towards the best of Beings;" but if Christian parents were to incorporate in their course of religious instruction,

the habit of a free and unreserved conversation on the practical effects of truth, and occasionally retired with their children within the closet of devotion, to pray *with them*, and *for them*, specifically and alone, it would imperceptibly beget such a union and intimacy of spirit, that *they* would be no less anxious to unburden their spirit from its load of anxiety, and sorrow, than the parent would feel delighted to become their spiritual counsellor and friend.

It was when her Mamma was sitting with her on a sabbath afternoon, after hearing a sermon at the church which she very much disliked, that she made the first direct allusion to the recent exercise of her mind.

"It is but rarely," she remarked, "that we can, in *any* local situation, obtain every comfort and convenience which habit, and which inclination may desire; and sometimes those spots which appear the most inviting and attractive, are the most destitute of the essential source of personal and domestic felicity. Perhaps it would be difficult to procure a more pleasant residence, than our own, or one which is more conducive to our general health; but I assure you that I often deplore the consequences which must inevitably result, from our being deprived of the privilege of attending an evangelical ministry." "It gives me pleasure," said *Mrs. Holmes*, "to hear you deplore the loss of such a privilege, as it is a proof that you value it." "Yes, Mamma, I do value it, but now, alas! I have no prospect of enjoying it. But I feel more for others than I feel for myself, especially the junior members of our family; as I fear now they are removed from the restraints which pure evangelical truth imposes on the conscience, that they will devote themselves to the pleasures of the world, which will give them a distaste for those of religion." "And does my dear Louisa," said *Mrs. Holmes*, "prefer the pleasures of religion, to those of the world?" "I trust, Mamma, I do; though I am almost afraid to speak with confidence on such a delicate, and important question. I know from past experience, that there may be deep religious impressions, and powerful religious excitements, even while the heart retains all its native propensities and antipathies; but I hope *it hath pleased God*, to employ my late affliction as the

means of bringing me into a state of *fellowship with himself, and his Son Jesus Christ*. I murmured when he smote me, but now I can say, *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word.*"

"We have both thought," said *Mrs. Holmes*, "that God was dealing graciously with your soul, and I have often retired to pray that you might come out of this affliction, a new creature in Christ Jesus; yet we could not overcome the strange reluctance we felt, to converse with you on the subject: but as it hath pleased God to answer our prayers, I must convey the glad tidings to your father, who will embrace you as one alive from the dead." "As you have drawn me," *Miss Holmes* replied, "into a premature disclosure on this subject, I certainly cannot forbid your communicating to my dear Father, the substance of our conversation, but I must request that you will take no notice of it to any other person. For if I should now make a profession of religion, and then when health returns, relapse into my former course of gaiety and folly, what essential injury shall I do to others?" "But," my dear, "you may be *confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*"

"Yes, I know; that when the work of grace is begun, it will be carried on, notwithstanding the various impediments which may obstruct its progress, or the artifices which may be employed by the great adversary, to effect its destruction; but I am not satisfied that what I feel is the work of grace. It may be nothing more than the effect of my own fears; and if so, it will disappear as soon as they subside—or it may be the necessary consequence of that order of serious thought and reflection, which a lengthened indisposition generally originates; and if so, every trace of its existence will be obliterated when I again intermingle with the occurrences of active life." "But have you not, my dear *Louisa*, *tasted* that the Lord is gracious, as well as *felt* his terrors which have made you afraid? and can you on cool reflection, suppose that He will ever abandon *one*, to whom he has manifested himself as he does not to the world?" "I have felt no terror on my spirit,"

said *Miss Holmes*, "which may be an essential defect in my experience, and those excitements which I have ascribed to the love of God shed abroad in my heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, may prove the momentary joy of the stony ground hearer, in whom the seed of truth could not thrive because it took no root. If, after a period of trial, I am induced to believe that I have felt the renovating power of divine grace. I trust that I shall have courage given me to make an open and decided profession of the faith of Christ without regarding the remarks to which it may subject me; but till then, it is my earnest wish, that you entrust no one but my dear father with that communication, which I have quite unintentionally made to you. I have seen so many throw off their religious profession, and return to the scenes which they had abandoned; and I have such a dread of apostacy, that it is my fixed and absolute determination to have some practical proof of the efficacy of my principles to resist temptation, and bring the dispositions of my heart into subjection to the authority of Jesus Christ, before I make any profession."

[No. 54.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

THE PROGRESS OF VICE.

PART I.



“It was on a fine summer’s evening, as they were returning from a ramble into the country, that they overtook a new married couple, who had taken lodgings near them at Ryde, when an accidental occurrence took place, which led to a close, but fatal intimacy.” Page 11.

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THE PROGRESS OF VICE.

PART I.

“As in the succession of the seasons, each, by the invariable laws of nature, affects the productions of what is next in course: so, in human life, every period of our age, according as it is well or ill spent, influences the happiness of that which is to follow. Virtuous youth gradually brings forward accomplished and flourishing manhood; and such manhood passes of itself, without uneasiness, into respectable and tranquil old age. But when nature is turned out of its regular course, disorder takes place in the moral, just as in the vegetable world. If the spring put forth no blossoms, in summer there will be no beauty, and in autumn no fruit. So, if youth be trifled away without improvement, manhood will be contemptible, and old age miserable. If the beginning of life have been vanity, its latter end can be no other than *exaction of spirit.*” *Blair.*

ON Mr. Llewellyn's return from business in the evening I perceived an unusual dejection in his countenance; and occasionally an involuntary sigh escaped him, which convinced me that he was in trouble. At length I asked him, if he had met with any thing during the day of a painful nature? “Yes, Sir,” he replied, “the evil which I have long dreaded is now come upon an old friend.” He then gave me the following letter from Mr. Phillips, who originally belonged to the same office in which Mr. Llewellyn was stationed on his first settlement in London.

“MY DEAR LLEWELLIN,

“The evil day has at length overtaken me. I am committed for forgery. My prosecutors are determined to push the severity of the law against me. I have no chance to escape, unless God work a miracle for me; and that I cannot expect. No—I dare not. I must now expiate my crimes against society by the sacrifice of my life; but by what sacrifice can I atone for my crimes against God? I cannot ask you to see Messrs. I—— and R——, to induce them to forego the prosecution, because I know the die is cast; but I request, as a particular favour, that you will call and see my poor dear wife, and break the mournful tidings to her. I wrote a note to her, when I was apprehended, to say that I should not be able to return home for a day

or two. This I did, that my absence might not alarm her. After you have seen her, and my solicitor, Mr. L——, you will oblige me if you will condescend to visit me in my gloomy and dismal abode. Had I taken that good advice which you have so often given me, but which, unfortunately for me and mine, I rejected, I should not have been where I now am. My companions have brought me to ruin, and now they desert me; as the herd shun the victim that is marked for death.

“Your unhappy friend,

Newgate, August 12.

“PHILLIPS.

“Have you seen the parties?” “Yes, Sir,” he replied; “I immediately called on Messrs. I—— and R——, but no arguments can induce them to relinquish the prosecution. I then waited on the solicitor, who says that he has no chance of escape. I then called on Mrs. Phillips. She was sitting in a small back parlour, pressing to her bosom one of the finest babes I ever saw, while her two other children, who are about four or five years of age, were playing their gambols on the carpet. As I had not called since the birth of her second child, she expressed some degree of surprize at seeing me, and added, ‘I hope, Sir, you bring me no bad news.’ ‘I am sorry,’ I replied, ‘that it is not in my power to bring you good news.’ ‘Is my husband alive, Sir?’ ‘Yes, Madam, he is.’ ‘Is he well?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘What evil tidings have you to tell me, Sir? My dreams last night foreboded evil. I have been expecting, through the whole of the day, to see some messenger of woe. Tell me, Sir;—is my husband in prison?’ I paused; my feelings overcame me. I knew not how to disclose the fact. The eldest boy, on seeing his mother weep, ran to her, and threw his arms round her neck, and kissed her, and said, ‘Don’t cry, Mamma; Papa will soon come home.’ ‘You will excuse my importunity, Sir,’ said Mrs. Phillips, ‘but I am convinced, from your manner, that you have some heavy tidings to communicate; and as I would much rather have the whole catastrophe thrown open before me, than I would be kept in suspense, I must intreat you to let me know *what misfortune has befallen my poor unhappy husband.*’

'I hope, Madam,' I replied, 'God will give you strength to bear up under the calamity which it is my lot to disclose to you. Your husband is in prison.' 'Not for forgery, I hope, Sir.' 'Yes, Madam, that is the crime for which he is committed.' 'On whom?' 'On Messrs. I—— and R——'s.' 'Woe is me!—woe are ye, my sweet babes!' and just as she said, 'Woe art thou, my husband!' a strong hysteric fit came on, which continued, with some few intervals, for more than two hours. She sometimes sung a few wild and plaintive notes, and then raised her voice into the sweetest melody of joy—alternately laughed and cried—smote her breast—wrung her hands—threw her fine auburn hair in loose tresses over her shoulders,—till at length she sunk into a sullen melancholy, from which we could not rouse her, and in that state I left her."

Mr. Phillips was the only son of a country gentleman of a very large fortune. He lost his mother when he was about ten years of age; but this loss was partially supplied by the kindness of an aunt, who endeavoured to train him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. He received a good education at one of our public schools, and made great proficiency in learning; but he was too much attached to the society of gay companions, and as he was always supplied with an abundance of money, they courted and flattered him. On his leaving school he remained at home for upwards of twelve months, devoting himself to a life of pleasure, when his father resolved to remove him from the scene of danger, and procure for him a situation in London.

There is a wise medium for parents to observe towards their children, between extreme parsimony and profuse indulgence; but the experience of all ages attests, that the latter is much more fatal in its influence than the former. If a youth, when at school, or when he enters on the more public stage of life, has a larger supply of money than his actual wants require, he is placed under strong temptations to expend it extravagantly; and imperceptibly forms habits which his judgment may condemn when his passions are become too strong to allow him to correct them. As the love of accumulation very rarely takes possession of the youth-

ful breast; and habits of economy are seldom formed when more is to be expended than absolute necessity requires, it is generally found that those parents lay the foundation for the ruin of their own children, who, by a mistaken act of kindness, supply them with a superabundance of wealth.

When he entered on the situation which his father procured for him he was assiduous in the discharge of his duties, and conducted himself with so much propriety, that he gained the esteem and confidence of the gentleman in whose service he was engaged.

It is generally admitted, by those who have studied human nature, that though all are inherently depraved, yet no one becomes suddenly wicked. It has pleased God still to preserve some degree of respect for social goodness in the human breast, and to make it the interest of man, as a member of society, to cultivate the virtues on which its peace and prosperity depend. But notwithstanding the various expedients which are adopted, under the general administration of the laws of providence, to guard the rising generation from the contaminating and corrupting influence of evil, we see them, in a regular progression, becoming more and more depraved; and one of the earliest and most effective means which can be employed to bring about this fatal catastrophe, is the popular reading of the day. This is a reading age; and if we have but few, in any department of literature, who can be compared with the intellectual giants of former times, yet there is a much larger proportion of intelligence diffused through the great mass of the people than at any former period of our history. Opinions which were received by our forefathers with the utmost degree of implicitness, are now examined with a boldness and freedom of inquiry, which marks the independence of the times in which we live; and institutions which have no other basis than popular prejudice, are in danger of being subverted and destroyed. The establishment of our Sunday, and Lancasterian, and National Schools, has raised the lower orders of society from that state of mental torpor in which they have been sunk for generations; while the improved systems of instruction which are introduced into our public seminaries, where the higher ranks receive their education, have

given an impetus to their minds, which keeps pace with the progressive improvement of the present era. Demands are now made on the press which no labour can adequately supply; but unhappily, its productions, like the fatal tree in the garden of Eden, impart the knowledge, not only of good, but evil; and the unsuspecting youth, who retires from the busy cares of his profession to spend a solitary hour in promoting his intellectual gratification or improvement, becomes the victim of the spirit of scepticism, or the demon of impurity. The popular writer who holds the public mind under the spell of his genius, sends forth the unhallowed productions of his pen; but who can calculate on the extent of that injury which he may do to the morals of others by the publication of his volume? "Observe it, when it has found its way into the bosom of a family, the members of which have been reared up in the faith of religion, and in the love of virtue. It seizes on the attention of one of them. It is at first read secretly, and by stealth. Its specious reasonings insinuate themselves into the understanding of its victim. Its polluting maxims leave an impression on his heart. Not at once are its arguments yielded to. Not at once are its guilty principles tolerated. The book may even, at times, be shut with feelings of aversion and fear, at the daring conclusions to which it points. But it is again opened. Curiosity, perhaps, to know the extent of its wild inferences, may tempt to another, and to a third inspection; till the repeated perusals complete the ascendancy of its bold and bad speculations. Then, alas! how speedily those safeguards, which wisdom and affection had raised against the influence of vice, are overturned!—how the mind swells with the proud and foolish thought of emancipation, from what are now named idle scruples, and doting prejudices!—how the look of scorn is turned even upon that kind instructor, the lessons of whose parental experience had formerly been received with reverence!—how the modesty and piety of the youth, *remembering his Creator*, are supplanted by the arrogance and scoffing of the disputatious and blustering infidel!—and falling a prey to *the men who lie in wait to deceive*, how zealously he

becomes, in his own circle, the promoter of irreligion and libertinism!"

It was to this cause that Mr. Phillips ascribed his ruin. For though he had been trained up to reverence religion, and had the amiability of virtue pourtrayed before his eye in the conduct of his father, yet he was not able to detect the false reasonings, or withstand the beguiling charms of the authors who first corrupted his principles, and then perverted his judgment. Having nothing to hope from the promises of the Scriptures, and nothing to fear from its threatenings, every barrier which had been placed around the evil propensities of his heart was now broken down; and though there were some intermitting seasons of mistrust, suspicion, and dread, yet he became resolutely determined to enjoy a life of pleasure and dissipation. For some time he associated with Mr. Gordon and his companions; but as he could not occupy the chief seat in their convivial meetings, and rule amongst them as the hero of their parties, he withdrew, and formed a circle more congenial with his taste. In some points of resemblance there was a striking conformity between him and Gordon; but in others there was an entire dissimilarity. He was equally depraved in principle, but less witty; possessed more solid learning, but could not command his adroitness of manner; equally attached to loose and dissipated associates, but not so well qualified to rule over them by the charm and fascination of his genius; more extravagant, because more wealthy, but not so generous; and though his superior in rank and expectation, yet he was his inferior in address and taste. Gordon, amidst all his irregularities, refused to associate with the openly dissolute, and chose for his companions those who stood fair in the estimation of others; while Phillips was most happy with the most depraved, and gave his society to any one who would pander to his vices, and caress his folly.

His application to the duties of his profession was unremitting, for the space of two years after his settlement in London: but now his course of dissipation had so completely corrupted his principles, and deranged his habits, that he became inattentive, and impatient of contradiction; and having a fortune in expectancy, he treat-

ed with contempt the intimations which he received, that if he did not observe more punctually the rules of the office he must procure another situation. At length the gentleman in whose service he was engaged wrote to his father, to say that he could not consent to keep his son any longer; urging, at the same time, the necessity of his removal from London, as the only expedient that could save him from utter ruin. Nothing could have given a greater shock to the feelings of the old gentleman than this letter; as he had always received such strong assurances from his son, that he was conducting himself with the utmost degree of propriety: and though his more frequent demands for money had excited a few temporary suspicions, yet he thought him incapable of deception. He now came to London, and was soon convinced that no alternative remained but the immediate removal of his son from that scene of dissipation and extravagance in which he had been living. But when it was first proposed to him he positively refused to leave. He spurned rebuke—set command at defiance—resolutely withstood the force of the strongest intreaties, and seemed resolved on taking some desperate step; but the tears of his affectionate father disarmed him of his adventurous purposes, and made him submissive. “I will go, father,” he said, with a pathos of manner which bespoke some remaining sensibilities of heart, “and I deeply regret that you should ever shed any tears on my account, except those of joy.”

Near Mr. Phillips resided a Mr. Lea, a gentleman who had recently retired from business with a small fortune. He had two children. A son, whom he left in his business, and a daughter, who resided with him. Miss Lea was about twenty years of age. A fine figure, beautiful, and highly accomplished; yet such was her extreme modesty, that she seemed unconscious of those attractions which every other person so much admired. As an intimacy had just been formed between the two families, Mr. Phillips, on his return home, began to pay her marked attention, and a mutual attachment was formed between them. Though Mr. Lea could not give his daughter so large a fortune as Mr. Phillips *could give to his son*, yet this circumstance formed no objection to the connection, as he very naturally con-

cluded, that no arrangement was so likely to recover him from his dissipated habits, as a union with an amiable female on whom his affections were placed.

I envy not the man who can consent to drag his existence through all that is captivating in beauty—all that is excellent in moral worth—all that is attractive in social life, without being subdued by that passion, which invests the character of its victim with the highest and most delicate charms. This passion, when pure and virtuous, has been known to reclaim the most hopeless; and those who have been incapable of controlling their own ungovernable tempers, and who have abandoned themselves to vice in its most obnoxious forms, have, when subdued by female influence, become the ornaments and the glory of the domestic circle.

The change which was now apparent in young Phillips, was too visible not to be seen, and too lovely not to be admired; and his aged father, who had wept over him as the prodigal who had wasted his substance in riotous living, now embraced him as one who had been reclaimed from the error of his ways, and who bid fair to become a good and virtuous member of society. His early taste for reading now returned, but it was more pure. He usually spent his mornings in his study, and in the evening he passed away his time in company with his esteemed Amelia.

Miss Lea had received a first-rate education, and excelled in most of the elegant accomplishments of the female sex; yet she had not forgotten that she was a woman, and that there were other attainments necessary to qualify her to preside over a family. It was this conviction that induced her, as soon as she had left school, to devote her attention to the duties of domestic life, and made her more ambitious to excel in the art of regulating a family, than in playing a tune, or sketching a landscape. She enjoyed an occasional visit, when friendship formed the party, but *home* was

“The circle where her passions mov’d,
The centre of her soul;”

and if she ever expressed herself in terms of severity, it was when she saw one of her own sex given to a life of fashionable vagrancy. Her reading, if not profound, was extensive. and her habit of discrimination was just.

She had a taste to relish the sublime in thought; and the beautiful in description, and could converse with ease and correctness on most subjects; yet she very rarely conversed much in company, being more anxious to please, than to shine. She was amiable in her temper, benevolent in her disposition, and religious in her habits; and though a severe critic might have detected a few blemishes in her character, yet it contained so many excellencies that no one could withhold the meed of praise.

It is customary with some plebeian fathers, in imitation of the nobility of the country, to make ample provision for the eldest son, while the junior branches of the family are left in a state of *comparative indigence*. This custom, which flatters the pride and vanity of the parent, who expects to enjoy a posthumous fame in the person of his first-born, is the bane of domestic felicity; as it generally calls into excitement the evil passions of envy and jealousy, which are no less fatal to the happiness of him against whom they are directed, than to the harmony of those who are governed by them. In other families, where the custom of raising the first-born son to a state of pre-eminence is exploded, another practice is adopted, equally unwise and unjust. The principal portion of the property is bequeathed to the sons, while only some small pittance is allotted to the daughters; who, with fewer capabilities to make any provision for themselves, are left in a more dependent and destitute state. This evil, which is spreading amongst us, requires correction; for *if there be* an unequal distribution of wealth, reason and religion require that the largest share should be given to the most helpless. On this principle Mr. Lea resolved to act in reference to his daughter; and being anxious that she should never be deprived of her property by any of the ordinary disasters of the world, he settled it on her for life. This arrangement gave entire satisfaction to Mr. Phillips, who was so much pleased with the proposed union, that he settled on his daughter-in-law, on the day of her marriage, £200 per year.

Though the old folks had it in their power to keep their children in a state of independence, yet they thought that some employment would be more conducive to domestic happiness than a life of indolence; and as Mr. Phillips was more attached to London than the

country, a situation was obtained for him in a respectable bank in the city. Every arrangement being made, they approached the nuptial altar, and the silken knot was tied, under mutual pledges of fidelity and affection. The long expected event was announced to the peaceful inhabitants of the village by the ringing of the parish bells, and many came to give their benediction to the happy pair as they were leaving the scene of their bliss to spend *the honey moon* in the Isle of Wight.

It was on a fine summer's evening, as they were returning from a ramble into the country, that they overtook a new married couple, who had taken lodgings near them at Ryde, when an accidental occurrence took place which led to a close, but fatal intimacy. Mr. Phillips had picked up a beautiful miniature painting in a red morocco case, and on passing the lady he recognized its owner. "I regret, Sir," he said to the gentleman, "that you should become a widower so soon after you became a husband." This extraordinary address, proceeding from the lips of an entire stranger, produced a momentary embarrassment; but on his presenting the picture the meaning was explained, and many expressions of thanks were given in return for it, with the following apology for his carelessness;—"Having the original, Sir, made me less careful of the copy." They sauntered into the town together, and being pressed, Mr. and Mrs. Phillips accepted an invitation to spend the remaining part of the evening with their new associates. On entering the drawing-room they found a cold collation on the table, which proved very acceptable. The cloth was soon removed, and the cards were introduced. "Now, Sir," said Mr. Owen, "we will pass away the time in my favourite amusement, if it be perfectly agreeable." Mrs. Phillips declined, but her husband consented, and it was late before they returned home. He had not touched a pack of cards since his departure from London; but now his passion for the game returned, and the greater part of the evenings which he spent in the island were devoted to its gratification. He alternately won and lost; and though prudence forbade him to stake much money, yet when the last game was played he found himself about five guineas minus. The loss of this sum was *a trifling evil*; but a dormant passion was now roused up

to active excitement; a habit was re-formed which he had determined to abandon for ever; the barrier which the most solemn vows had cast up, to obstruct his passage to a course of open profligacy, was broken down; and to this ill-fated hour may be traced the future calamities of his unhappy life.

He now hastened to town, where he found Mr. and Mrs. Lea, who had taken a genteel house for them in the City Road, and made every provision for their domestic felicity which parental solicitude could supply. "Indeed, my honoured parents," said Mrs. Phillips, "you have exceeded my most sanguine expectations, and I hope that our future bliss will reward you for all your kindness." "If you are happy," said her father, "that is all the reward we covet; and I have no doubt but God will bless you." Turning to his son-in-law, he said, "You have a good wife, and I flatter myself she has a good husband; but if you wish to preserve and promote domestic happiness, you must love your *home*, as the sequestered spot which Providence marks out for the cultivation of conjugal bliss. Have but few associates; keep holy the Sabbath day; spend your evenings at home; and never suffer any games of hazard to be played here, as they have such a fatal tendency."

Mr. and Mrs. Lea tarried a few weeks after Mr. Phillips had entered on the duties of his office; when, having accomplished the design of their visit, they returned to their peaceful retreat in the country, where they hoped to spend their few remaining years in undisturbed quietude. But they soon found that they had been despoiled of their chief bliss. For though their love for each other still glowed with its native purity and ardour; and though their flowers blossomed, and their fruits ripened, as in former years; and though their birds sang in notes as soft and as enchanting as in the spring time season of their life; yet the object of their mutual and their fond attachment was far away, animating another dwelling with her presence, and blessing another family with her smiles, and her affection.

[No. 55.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

MISS HOLMES.

PART III.



"To thee do I now come, invited by the exceeding great and precious promises of thy word, and trusting for acceptance in the efficacy of the Saviour's death; laying myself at thy feet, I would say, 'God, be merciful unto me a sinner.'" Page 3.

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1824.

MISS HOLMES.

PART III.

"The grand difficulty in religion after all, is perseverance—fidelity to the cause we have chosen—constancy and courage in our Master's service. It is comparatively easy, under the grace of God, to make resolutions; the difficulty is to keep them."
Cunningham.

THE scene which opens on the imagination of the young Christian is often so beautiful and enchanting—it so deeply fixes and engages his attention, and gives such strong and pleasurable excitement to his best affections, that he turns away with an eye of comparative indifference from those objects, and pursuits, with which he has been previously familiar, under a full conviction that he can never derive felicity, except from that *new source* which he has discovered. It is, when he is under these novel and powerful impressions, that the long neglected Bible discloses new beauties; no theme of meditation, or discussion, presents any subduing charms but Christ Jesus, and him crucified; and having felt the transition from a state of spiritual death to a newness of life, to be attended by such an exquisite susceptibility of feeling, he is in danger of anticipating too large a proportion of spiritual enjoyment; which not unfrequently becomes the occasion of deep mental depression.

During the continuance of her indisposition Miss Holmes devoted so much of her attention to the subject of religion, and felt so deeply interested in it, that her general health became impaired, and a shade of melancholy was cast over her spirit. She was forewarned of the possibility of such an effect being produced by her intense application; but the usual apology which she made to her pious mother was: "Can I take too much interest in that important subject, into which angels

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desire to look? or can I ever hope to enjoy such a favourable time for its investigation as the present, when I am precluded from mingling with the cares or the amusements of the world?"

As the first impression of truth had produced such a powerful effect, she, very naturally concluded, that it would continue to operate with an undiminished force, till she had attained that state of sinless perfection, which constitutes the peculiar honour of the saints in light. The following form of self-dedication to God she drew up and signed, having vowed in the most solemn manner to observe it to the full extent of her pledge.

"Eternal and unchangeable Jehovah! thou great Creator of heaven and earth, and adorable Lord of angels and men, I desire with the deepest humiliation and abasement of soul, to fall down at this time in thine awful presence, and earnestly pray, that thou wilt impress my heart with a clear perception of thine unutterable and inconceivable glories.

"To thee do I now come, invited by the exceeding great and precious promises of thy word; and trusting for acceptance in the efficacy of the Saviour's death. Laying myself at thy feet, I would say, 'God be merciful unto me a sinner.' The irregular propensities of my depraved nature have in ten thousand aggravated instances wrought to bring forth *fruit unto death*. And if thou shouldst be strict to mark mine offences, I must be silent under a load of guilt, and immediately sink into destruction. But thou hast graciously called me to return to thee, though I have been a *backsliding child*. I come unto thee, O Lord, convinced not only of my sin, but of my folly; and while I implore mercy through the mediation of Jesus Christ, I would be no less importunate for the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit, that I may be entirely conformed to thee. Permit me to bring unto thee those powers and faculties which I have ungratefully alienated from thy service; and receive, I beseech thee, thy poor revolted creature, who is now convinced of thy right to her, and who desires nothing in the world so much as to be thine.

"I bring to thee a dark benighted mind, to be illuminated with divine knowledge. Thou hast the words of *eternal life*; I therefore resign my understanding to

thy teaching. I bring to thee a corrupt and deceitful heart; do thou cleanse and make it upright before thee. Do thou expel all the evils which lurk within it, and make it a temple for thyself. May the same mind which was in Christ Jesus, be in me. May I possess the same humility which he displayed—the same indifference to the riches—the pleasures of the world—the same spirit of zeal for thine honour, and of benevolence towards men. May I ever wear the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit; be enabled to adorn the profession which I hope to make; and finally be admitted into the kingdom of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

“And I do now most solemnly give myself unto thee, as one whom thou hast made alive from the dead, with a firm and unalterable determination to live devoted to thee; loving thee supremely—walking in thy fear,—and glorifying thee in my body and my spirit, which are thine.”

This practice of self-dedication, which is often recommended to the young Christian, may tend to increase his reverence for God, and to make him more watchful over his own spirit; but unless he has very clear perceptions of the way of salvation, it may be productive of essential injury. For though we are told in the most express language, that *we are saved by grace through faith; and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast*, yet when the distinction between obedience, as *the fruit of faith*, and *the hope of reward*, is not accurately and perpetually observed, there is a danger of contracting a self-righteous spirit, which by aiming at personal perfection will bring the soul into a state of spiritual bondage.

Miss Holmes having most solemnly dedicated herself to God, and formed a romantic conception of the high capabilities of the renewed mind, began to prescribe for herself a set of rules for her government, which she resolved to observe. If these rules had related merely to her conduct to man, she might have kept them; but as they included the regulation of the disposition, and the frame of her mind towards God, they were founded on a mistaken conception of her own ability. They imperceptibly diverted her attention from the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, by faith in which sinners are

accepted and justified, to a laborious effort to obtain a high degree of sinless excellence; and as she progressively discovered so many, and such lamentable defects in her obedience, that peace of mind which she enjoyed when "first she knew the Lord" was destroyed, and she gradually sunk into a state of despondency: By making this fatal, yet common mistake, she was led to the conclusion, that the attainments of the genuine Christian were placed beyond her reach, and that it would be on her part, an act of presumption, in attempting to acquire them.

An evangelical ministry is instituted to assist, and promote the edification of them that believe, no less than to convert sinners from the error of their ways—to guard them against those misconceptions of truth, which prove injurious to their happiness and prosperity—and to explain that mysteriousness which rests over their earlier experience, when there is a constant, and often a rapid interchange of hope and of fear, of sorrow and of joy, of a bright prospect of future bliss, and of a foreboding apprehension of future woe. Those who attend such a ministry, partake of the advantages of it, without being conscious of the benefit which they receive; but if indisposition, or local distance, or any other circumstance prevent a Christian from attending this ordinance of grace, he may linger in a state of mental perplexity and depression, without being able either to remove it, or account for it.

Domestic engagements prevented Mrs. Loader paying a visit to the Elms, but the following letter is a proof of the deep interest which she took in the welfare of her friend; and also of her ability to give her judicious counsel:

MY DEAR LOUISA,

I am fearful lest you should construe my silence into indifference; but I flatter myself, that the following explanation will excuse me from such an imputation. I was from home when your's of *last month* arrived; and since my return, a severe family trial has so deeply engaged my attention, that I have been prevented replying to it. It is impossible for words to express the pleasure I felt from the perusal of your

first very interesting letter: and though the degree of that pleasure was somewhat diminished on the reception of your *second*, yet I cannot refrain offering you my most sincere congratulations, on account of what the Lord has done for you, and is still doing. Clouds and darkness are often round about him, while he is silently and unobserved carrying on his own work; and when it is not in our power to trace the operation of his hand, we are required to stand still, and he will show us his salvation. In the early experience of the Christian there are many circumstances which perplex and confound the mind, and which appear to place the *good hope* in the most imminent danger; but it is the province of faith calmly to wait the issue, remembering that

“ His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flow’r.”

I am not surprised, my dear Louisa, that you should regret having made what you call a premature disclosure of your Christian experience, especially as you begin to entertain some strong doubts of its genuine nature. This is very natural, and very common. If the experimental influence of the truth fell under the immediate observation of our senses, we should be able to mark its progress with the most perfect accuracy; but as the seat of its *first* and most *powerful* operations is the heart—that province which the eye can never penetrate; and as it merely diffuses itself over the exercise of our intellectual and moral faculties, without acting alone, and independently of them, we almost necessarily, *at times*, suspect whether we have ever felt it. It is true, we may see a change in our conduct, and a change in the disposition and temper of our mind; but as this uniformly takes place in consequence of our full conviction of its propriety, we may, *especially in a gloomy hour*, be incapable of tracing it up to a supernatural cause.

The first impressions of divine truth in the human heart, are generally strong and deep—they produce a powerful excitement of the passions; and such is the *intense* degree of interest which is usually felt at such a period, that no variation is anticipated, except it be

some higher and more blissful elevation of soul—some ascent to a spiritual Pisgah, from whence the lot of our future inheritance with the saints in light may be clearly seen. But when the mind becomes more familiar with the scenes of its own perceptions, and they lose somewhat of their novelty; though they still retain their ascendancy over the judgment, yet the excitement which they produce becomes less powerful. This decline of feeling often induces the young Christian to suspect, that the cause of its original production must be found, not in the grace of God, but the uninfluenced operations of his own passions. It is when the mind is thus variously exercised, that the invisible enemy of our peace often comes to augment the degree of our perplexity, by insinuating, that if we were renewed in the spirit of our mind, the fact of our renovation would be so conspicuous, that we could never doubt it—that if we did really love the Lord, our love would glow with undiminished ardour—that if our faith were genuine, we should never be permitted to stagger at any of the promises of God through unbelief; and that if we were actually made partakers of the divine nature, we should for ever escape the corruption that is in the world.

If then my dear Louisa should doubt, where others have doubted before her, and if she should feel those causes of perplexity and depression operating on her mind, under which the faithful in Christ Jesus, in every age have laboured, ought she not to conclude from these circumstances, that she is walking beside the land marks of Christian experience, rather than in some devious, and unfrequented path? If you had no doubts, you would have cause to fear, and if you knew no change of feeling, you would have cause to suspect your change of heart.

“Come then—a still, small whisper in your ear,—
She has no hope, who never had a fear:
 And *she* that never doubted of her state,
She may perhaps—perhaps *she* may, too late.”

“I am happy to find by your last letter, that you have disclosed the state of your mind to your dear parents; for while I certainly approved of the motive which induced you to conceal it from

them, yet I think you have acted wisely in breaking through your resolution. As they have so often wept over you, when you were living without God, and without Christ in the world; and have, with so much fervour, intermingled their supplications at the footstool of the Divine throne for your conversion, it would have been an act of unkindness, to have kept them in a state of ignorance on a subject in which they are so deeply interested. You should communicate to them not only the general fact, that you are *now* become "*a fellow-heir of the grace of life,*" but also the peculiar state of your mind, as they are so well qualified to give you that instruction and consolation which you may require. It is by giving vent to the feelings of the soul, that we gain relief from our most poignant troubles; and though you perhaps can more readily communicate your experience to an absent friend, than to your own parents, yet, if you make the effort, the barrier which obstructs an unreserved disclosure of all you *feel*, and all you *fear*, will soon be broken down, and then your spiritual intercourse will be free and unfettered. It will require, on your part, I have no doubt, a great sacrifice of feeling, to take the step which I have now ventured to recommend; but you know who has said, My grace shall be sufficient for thee—and as thy day, thy strength shall be; and if you by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, make your request unto him, he will redeem his own pledge, and give you strength to help you in every time of need.

"I have often regretted your removal from London, especially since I found that you are not favoured with an evangelical ministry in the church. This circumstance must operate as a serious drawback upon your social happiness; and now you are brought to feel the importance of religion, I am not surprized that it should cast such a gloom over your mind. You ask me what you are to do, when you are able to attend public worship.—This is an important question, but I feel no hesitation in giving you that advice which I have given to others, who have been placed in the same situation. If there be no chapel within a convenient distance, in which the Gospel is preached, go to your parish church as usual; but if there be, I think it your duty to attend

there. " I do not recommend you to secede, for the mere sake of secession; but for your spiritual improvement, which will depend more on a pure evangelical ministry, than any other secondary cause. Some, I am aware, would urge you to go to your parish church, even if the minister be an irreligious man, and stay there till it shall please God to introduce the Gospel into it; but as it is not in my power to reconcile such advice with the injunction of our Lord, *take heed what ye hear*; you cannot expect that I can give it my sanction. The eminently devout Christian loves the habitation of the Lord's house, and the place where his honour dwelleth; but have we any reason to believe that he dwells, in the manifestations of his love, in any place, except where the minister preaches salvation by grace through faith! But suffer the word of exhortation. You are now coming out amongst the difficulties of a public profession of religion; one friend may recommend you to adopt one plan, and another, another; and the more you consult, the more you may be perplexed, till at length you may be incapable of coming to any decision. To obviate this evil, go and meditate on the following passage, *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.* Reduce to practice the admonition of the wise man, and you will find that the Lord will give wisdom, as well as strength.

" I am much obliged by your invitation to the Elms, and intend, as soon as I can leave, to pay you a visit, when I hope to see you in perfect health. You will remember me very kindly to every member of your family, and believe me to be, your's affectionately,
" E. L——."

One of the most common place charges which is brought against evangelical religion, is, that it has a tendency to make its possessor melancholy; and if we were to form our judgment of it from the appearance and manner of some who profess it, we should conclude that it is just. They not only recede from all the pleasures and amusements of the social circle; but habitually wear that gloom on their countenance, which

indicates a singular dejection of spirit. But this dejection of spirit, which we may sometimes discover in a professor of evangelical religion, is not produced by his religious principles, but by his sense of personal guilt, and his want of that assurance of forgiveness, which the Gospel of Jesus Christ is intended to convey. He may for a season be permitted, by the Holy One of Israel, whose laws he has violated, and whom he has neglected to glorify, to remain under the sentence of self-condemnation; but when he is enabled to rely on the atonement made by Jesus Christ, and to appropriate the promise of mercy, he enjoys that peace which passeth all understanding. If then, we wish to form a correct estimate of the real tendency of evangelical truth, we must not go to the penitent sinner who labours under the deep convictions of guilt; when he is more prone to put from him the words of consolation, than listen to them: but to that established believer, who, having received the truth in the love of it, is enjoying its sacred and blissful influence over his mind. He will repel the charge as a libel on his faith, and unblushingly avow, that he never knew solid and substantial felicity, till he derived it from communion with God, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, and a hope of being presented faultless in his immediate presence. And though the spirit of scepticism, which is so generally diffused through all ranks of society, may ridicule such an avowal, as a delusion attempted to be practised on human credulity, yet surely no one, on reflection, can presume to say, that a Christian is not competent to bear testimony to the fact of his own experience. The religious principles which he has embraced, are represented by those who have never felt their influence, as having a tendency to make their possessor melancholy; and yet he declares that he has enjoyed a larger portion of mental peace since he embraced them, than he ever previously enjoyed. And whose testimony shall we admit, to be most conclusive? The testimony of those who are entirely ignorant of the question, or of those, whose knowledge qualifies them to decide? Suppose for example, a question were to arise respecting the excellencies or defects of a piece of music, should we venture to place any dependance on the opinion of

a man who has no taste for the science? If we did, should we not expose ourselves to ridicule or contempt? On such a question we should require the opinion of a competent witness, and no one can fairly assure this character, but the man of scientific attainments, combined with a correct state; and I appeal to the sober judgment of my readers, if they can allow any person to pronounce a judgment on the tendency of religion, who has never felt its holy influence. They may express their opinion, and they often do express it, but of what value or importance is it, in relation to the subject? They may say, that its tendency is to make us unhappy; but how can they prove it? Not certainly by appealing to the obvious design of Christianity; for that has been so unequivocally announced by the celestial messengers, that we cannot misconceive it. *And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.* And if they venture to appeal to the experience of the religious man, he candidly says, I am happy—my happiness differs from yours, it takes its rise from a different source, and possesses qualities which are peculiarly its own; but it is more pure, more exquisite, more substantial, because more intellectual, and spiritual; and involves in it anticipations which are to be realized, when the curtain of oblivion is drawn over the grave of your felicity. My happiness is the peace that passeth all understanding." But when we mention peace, to quote the language of a fine writer, we mean not the stupid security of a mind that refuses to reflect; we mean a tranquillity which rests on an unshaken basis, which no anticipations, however remote—no power of reflection, however piercing or profound—no evolutions which time may disclose, or eternity conceal,

are capable of impairing; a peace which is founded on the oath and promise of Him who cannot lie, which springing from the consciousness of an ineffable alliance with the Father of spirits, makes us to share in his fulness, to become a partner with him in his eternity; a repose, pure and serene as the unruffled wave, which reflects the heaven from its bosom, while it is accompanied with a feeling of exultation and triumph, natural to such as are conscious that ere long, having overcome, they shall possess all things."

There are many periods in the history of human life, when the power of religious principles over the mind commands the respect, and excites the admiration of the most inveterate infidel. Go and see the poor Christian, contented amidst his privations—the suffering Christian, patient under his protracted affliction—the dying Christian, resigned and happy in prospect of approaching dissolution; and if you can return from such a scene without admiring the influence of those principles which have such a fine effect in elevating, and supporting the soul of man, when visited by such direful calamities, it must be referred either to a want of taste, or want of a capacity for feeling.

He is the happy man, whose life ev'n now,
Shows somewhat of that happier life to come:
Who, doom'd to an obscure, but tranquil state,
Is pleas'd with it, and were he free to choose,
Would make his fate his choice.

Content indeed to sojourn while he must,
Below the skies, but having there his home.
The world o'erlooks him in her busy search
Of objects, more illustrious in her view.
And, occupied as earnestly as she,
Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the world.
She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not;
He seeks not hers, for he has proved them vain.
He cannot skim the ground like summer birds
Pursuing gilded flies; and such he deems
Her honours, her emoluments, her joys.
Therefore in contemplation in his bliss,
Whose power is such, that whom she lifts from earth
She makes familiar with a heaven unseen,
And shows him glories yet to be revealed

[No. 56.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

THE PROGRESS OF VICE.

PART II.



"She fell on her knees, with her eldest son kneeling by her side; and again implored mercy in the most pathetic strains of impassioned eloquence; but no tears,—no prayers,—no offers of indemnification could induce them to abandon their purpose."

Page 9.

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THE PROGRESS OF VICE.

PART II.

"Who can help lamenting to see the valuable enjoyments of home sacrificed to a fondness for amusements, and a rage for indiscriminate intercourse with a false, unfeeling world? But so it is. People were never more social, and never less domestic than they are now. The phrenzy has reached all ranks and degrees. Our females are no longer keepers at home."

Jay.

THEY had not entered into the marriage state many months before they began to anticipate the pleasure of having a family; and as Mrs. Phillips was more partial to the country than to London, and very naturally wished for the presence of her mother at the eventful crisis, it was determined that she should give birth to her first-born in her father's house. She left home on the anniversary of her nuptial day, in company with her husband, and arrived at the end of the journey without sustaining any inconvenience. Mr. Phillips remained with her about a week, and then returned to town with a heart overpowered by anxiety respecting the fate of his wife. Had he been a religious man he would have spent many an hour in his closet, imploring the Father of mercies to remember *his handmaid in her low estate*, and to bless, from its earliest infancy, the fruit of their union; but though he paid respect to the external ordinances of religion, he despised prayer as unnecessary and useless. His home, now the object of his affection had left it, possessed no attractions, and he usually spent his evenings with some of his friends. It was by accident, as he was returning from the bank rather earlier than usual, that he met Mr. Owen, whom he had not seen for many months; and having no engagement he consented to take tea with him.

Mr. Owen was a young man of prepossessing manners; his parents, who had been very respectable, were both dead, and the fortune which they bequeathed him was sufficiently large to enable him to carry on the business in which he was engaged. He married a young lady, a ward in chancery, who was entitled to a handsome fortune, which fell to her by the decease of

an uncle. She possessed some amiable qualities, but was rather too high in her spirit; and having formed romantic conceptions of the felicity of the conjugal state, she knew not how to endure her disappointment. Instead of bearing with the infirmities of her husband, and attempting to soothe the asperity of his temper by the mild, yet all-subduing influence of a pure and virtuous affection, she too often irritated him by provocations, and stung him by reproaches. She was too proud to stoop to the level of her situation, as the wife of a tradesman, and too extravagant in her dress, and in her mode of living, to regulate her expenditure by the amount of their actual income; which so thwarted all his schemes of economy, that he gave himself up to a life of pleasure, and thus accelerated the evil which he foresaw would eventually come upon them.

Mr. Phillips was forcibly struck with the contrast between the calm serenity of his own home and the perpetual discord which appeared to prevail at his friend's; but on hearing Mrs. Owen say, "I am engaged with a party to the Opera to-night," he could not refrain from expressing his surprize, that she attended such scenes of amusement except with her husband. "O Sir," said Mrs. Owen, "the honey-moon is gone down; Owen has his friends and pleasures, and I have mine." "I am sorry, Sir," said Mr. Owen, "that Mrs. Owen is not attached to her home. She is never pleased but when the hour comes that is to take her to some party." "And pray, Sir," said Mrs. Owen, "what have you done to attach me to it? Do you ever spend your evenings here? Are you not generally at the theatre, or the billiard table, or in company that is, if possible, more disreputable to your character?" "If I did spend my evenings at home," he replied, "I should spend them alone, and you know I hate solitude." "Yes, you hate solitude," she replied, "because you cannot endure reflection; but have you not made your own home alternately the abode of solitude, and discordant society. If you had not first neglected me, I should not have been forced to seek other company; but your conduct has left no alternative for me, but either perpetual solitariness in my own dwelling, or society amongst my friends."

Mr. Phillips was so hurt and disgusted with the internal wretchedness of this family, that he was preparing to retire; but being strongly pressed by Mr. Owen to spend the evening with him, he sat down to cards, and continued the play till a loud rat-tap at the door announced Mrs. Owen's return from the Opera. He then left for home, where he found a letter from Mrs. Lea, announcing the joyful intelligence of the birth of a son, and of the welfare of the mother. This was the more welcome, because it came at a moment when he was suffering some compunctious visitations on account of his departure from his domestic habits; and having given vent to his feelings, he resolved to avoid, in future, those snares which the spirit of evil was laying for his destruction. But unfortunately, in the course of the following week, when his mind was under a high degree of irritability, occasioned by the base ingratitude of a friend, he received a visit from Mr. Owen, who enticed him to take a walk. On passing along Pall Mall, Mr. Owen said, he just wanted to step in to see a friend, and they both entered together. He was not a little surprised to find himself in a billiard-room, and immediately accosted by an entire stranger, with all the ease and familiarity of a long and close intimacy. He declined playing, till he had drank rather freely, and then he entered into the game with spirit. At first he won, which gave him courage to hazard a larger sum; but, eventually, he lost all his cash, and ten pounds which he borrowed of his friend. When he called a few days afterwards, to pay the money, he accepted a challenge to spend another evening at billiards, when he hoped to win back the money he had lost; and as he thought his failure on the preceding occasion, was owing to his partial inebriety, he resolved, that he would take no more than one glass of wine till he had done playing. He kept firm to his purpose, and for some time, he was amassing his ill-gotten treasures; but he stood associated with a set of men who were too deeply skilled in the art of fraud, to permit their victim to escape till they had accomplished his ruin. The tide of his fortune again turned, and he did not leave the fatal room till he had once more trespassed on the kindness of his

friend for the loan of twenty pounds, who affected to deplore the reverse he had met with.

Mr. Phillips now obtained leave of absence for a few weeks, and went into the country to see his wife and his child; but the pleasure which the interview afforded him was counterbalanced by the declining health of his father, for whom he cherished the purest attachment. The severity of the preceding winter had impaired the health of the old gentleman; and though the mildness of the spring had proved favourable for his recovery, yet it was evident that he was rapidly approaching the sequel of human life. His mental faculties were as strong and vigorous as in earlier times; but his physical strength was gone, and his spirits sunk, at different intervals, to the lowest state of depression. It was when labouring under a morbid melancholy, which no expedient could alleviate, that the first interview took place between the father and the son; and though the old man made an effort to resume his wonted cheerfulness, yet the lines of sorrow were too strongly marked on his countenance to admit the complacent smile. In a tone which corresponded with the deep solemnity of the occasion, he said, "God is about to remove me. I have not long to live. I have settled all my affairs, and have left you a fortune, which will enable you to live in honour and repute. But, my son, I have a presentiment on my spirit that evil awaits you. I dread dying, more on your account than on my own, because when I am gone you will have no father to pity you when you are in trouble, or assist you when you may require aid. I saw you, in my dream, a few weeks since, surrounded by an armed force, and dragged without any respect to your age or rank, to the front of a prison—when I awoke; but the impression of that dream becomes deeper and stronger, and I fear, my child, that some evil will befall you when I am resting in the grave. May God preserve and bless you."

The old man grew considerably better during the visit of his son, and when he and his family left for London, he was so far recovered, that he promised to spend a month with them during the course of the summer. But he soon relapsed into his former state of dejection; and as he was sitting one evening in his arm

chair, reading a chapter in his Bible, according to his usual custom, he fell forwards on the ground, without sustaining any injury except a slight bruise on his right cheek. One of the servants, hearing a noise, ran into the parlour, when she saw her venerable master prostrate on the floor; and having called for help, she succeeded, with the assistance of others, in replacing him in his chair. Life was not gone, but it was ebbing very fast. Medical aid was sent for; and though for several hours there was no hope of his recovery, yet towards the morning he began to revive, and in the course of the following day he regained the use of his speech, when he asked for his son. As a messenger had been dispatched to London, to inform Mr. Phillips of his father's affliction, he arrived in the evening, which gave the old man great consolation. "I sat, my child, beside the bed of thy mother," he said, "while she yielded up her soul to God; and I hope you will now remain with me while I perform the same solemn act." After having given utterance to this request, he remained silent for a long time, with his eyes closed, his lips occasionally moving, and some few slight efforts were made to raise his hands, when he fell into a profound sleep, from which he did not awake till late in the morning. The first object which struck his eye when he awoke was his son, standing near him, to whom he presented his hand. "Well, father, you have had a long and a sweet sleep, and I hope you feel yourself better this morning." The old man was too full of trouble to speak; he wept many a silent tear; till at length he concealed his face beneath the bed clothes, and was heard to weep aloud. A long, death-like stillness followed this tumult of sorrow; when his house-keeper, who was on the opposite side, gently whispered, "I fear my master is gone!" but a slight motion of the clothes convinced them that he was still with them. They waited in painful and agonizing suspense; till at length he again put forth his hand to his son, and appeared more calm. "Why, father, are you so unhappy?" "Why! not on my own account, but yours. I saw you, in my dream last night, surrounded by an armed force, which was dragging you to the front of a prison, when you fell, and I saw you no more. Oh! my son! what

mean these dreams?—what means this presentiment of spirit, which forbodes such ill? May God bless and preserve you!” He lingered for the space of a few hours, when he had another attack, which deprived him of his reason, and in that state he continued till he expired.

Mr. Phillips, by the death of his father, became possessed of a large fortune; and though he was strongly urged, by his wife and her parents, to break up his London establishment, and reside on his estate, yet he decidedly refused. “I shall be unhappy away from society,” was his constant language. “But cannot you,” said his amiable wife, “find society enough in the bosom of your own family, and within the circle of friendship in which your father has moved for so many years?” But no arguments, however powerful, no persuasion, however impressive, could shake his purpose, or induce him, for one moment, to turn his attention to the security and serenity of a country life. For the first few months after his father’s decease he continued as attentive to business as at any former period, and seemed happy at home. But when the impression which that mournful event had made on his mind began to wear off, he gradually became more and more irritable in his temper—more extravagant in his habits; and would occasionally tarry to a very late hour before he returned home. Mrs. Phillips felt conscious that the ardour of his affection was declining, which made her more anxious to please, and more cautious to avoid every allusion or expression which was calculated to give offence.

She had consented to accompany him several times to the theatre, and other places of public amusement; but as she perceived that, by such a sacrifice of her principles, she was nourishing the evil she was solicitous to destroy, when a favourable opportunity presented itself, she frankly told him that she was unhappy. He listened to her tale with deep interest—wept over her, and the babe which lay folded in her arms—and vowed, in the most solemn manner, that he would abandon his associates, and once more devote himself to the cultivation of domestic happiness. She had now gained her point, and considered herself as one

of the happiest of women ; and soon after this change in the aspect of her affairs, she bore him a second child. No material alteration took place in his manners or in his habits for the space of more than two years ; when he again fell into the company of Mr. Owen, who had acquired such a fatal ascendancy over him, that he could do what he pleased with him.

The seat of all the moral disorders which prevail in the world is the human heart ; and until that undergoes an entire change, by the immediate influence of a supernatural power, no dependence can be placed on the permanent continuance of those reformatations which other causes will sometimes produce in the characters of men. We sometimes see the most dissolute reclaimed from the paths of vice by the charm of female excellence ; but when that charm becomes familiar to the mind, it loses its captivating and restraining power, and a relapse often ensues, which is more to be dreaded than the first deviations from virtue, because it revives passions and propensities that often gain strength in proportion to the sanctity of the obligations which their gratification violates.

In the former period of her deeply afflicted life, the change which took place in the character of her husband was very gradual ; it was by almost an imperceptible progress that she traced the unhallowed influence of evil over his temper and his habits. But now he broke loose, as by some mighty effort of mind, and seemed resolutely fixed on bringing on himself and his family swift destruction. He very seldom came home till a late hour in the morning ; and sometimes Mrs. Phillips would watch through the tedious hours of the night, expecting his return every moment, but expecting it in vain. From the bank he would go to the hotel, from thence to the theatre or the opera, and from thence to the billiard-table, where he either wasted his substance in riotous living, or lost it at play. The birth of his fourth child roused him out of the delirium of evil in which he had been living for many months ; but he soon fell back ; and though his wife had no conception of the extent of wickedness to which he had gone, yet she knew that he was rapidly squandering away his fortune, which she expected ere long to see a wreck.

He had been spending an evening with his infatuating companion, at an hotel in the city, when he consented to try his fortune once more at a billiard-table. That fatal night he lost £500, besides the cash he had with him; and as he could not raise a sufficient sum of money to pay this debt of honour without borrowing it of some friend, he committed a forgery on the firm in whose employment he still lived, calculating on his ability to procure the sum in time to take up the bill so as to prevent detection. But he was deceived. The forgery was discovered; and though he explained the circumstances which led to its commission, and offered to indemnify the parties against any loss, yet they resolved to let the law take its course.

Mrs. Phillips on her recovery from the shock, which this fatal news gave her, immediately wrote to her father, who hastened to London; and after consulting several friends, it was determined, that a personal application should be made to the prosecutors, to induce them, if possible, to forego the prosecution. She went, accompanied by her aged father, and her eldest son, and her child at the breast, and had an interview with them. She pleaded for mercy in her own name, and in the name of her children; and though she moved all to tears, yet she could not succeed in averting the fatal blow which was doomed to fall on her unfortunate and unhappy husband. "A paramount regard to the claims of public justice," said the senior partner, "will not permit us to forego the prosecution; though we will, out of respect to your feelings, and the hapless condition of your children, do all in our power to save the life of Mr. Phillips." She fell on her knees, with her eldest son kneeling by her side; and again implored mercy in the most pathetic strains of impassioned eloquence; but no tears—no prayers—no offers of indemnification could induce them to abandon their purpose, and she left the room in the agony of despair. The unkindness and the crimes of her husband were lost sight of in the magnitude of the danger in which he was involved; and, though she could not rescue him from the awful peril of his situation, yet she resolved to alleviate the anguish of his soul by every expression of affection, which she could give. She braved the hor-

rors of the gloomy cell, and the heart-rending spectacle of his misery and degradation—she disdained to upbraid or reproach—she mingled her tears of sympathy with his tears of bitter sorrow—and endeavoured by the consolations of religion to inspire him with the hope of obtaining mercy of the Lord in that hour when he would have to stand before his tribunal.

If the course of vice were as reputable as it is infamous; if it were as conducive to the promotion of personal and domestic happiness as it is destructive of it; if it yielded as much satisfaction as it produces misery; and if it led to as much honour as it does disgrace,—we should be at no loss to account for its resistless attractions. But when we have such palpable evidences of its demoralizing tendency, and are compelled to witness so often its fearful and horrifying termination, we are no less astonished than we are distressed, that so many should be found to pursue it. But such is the awful degree of infatuation which seizes the human spirit, that when a man has once given himself up to the dominion of his evil passions, he advances, with rapid strides, from one evil practice to another; often reproaching himself for his folly—yet he feels too powerless to redeem himself from his iniquities; often forming resolutions to amend his ways—but breaking through them at the return of the next temptation; haunted by the dread of detection when the crime is perpetrated—yet calculating with confidence on his escape from detection when planning a future crime; and like the seducer, he waxes worse and worse, corrupting others by his principles and his example, till death comes to terminate his career, and fix his doom.

Only a few weeks elapsed, after the commitment of the unfortunate Phillips, before his trial came on at the Old Bailey, before Mr. Justice ——. The case was proved, and the jury, after a few minutes deliberation, returned a verdict—Guilty—but recommended the prisoner to mercy. “On what grounds,” said the judge, “do you recommend him to mercy? Have you any doubts of his guilt?” “We have no doubt, my Lord,” said the foreman, “that he is guilty of the offence for which he stands indicted; but we think that the loss of *life* is too severe a punishment for such a crime.” In

this recommendation of the jury Mr. I——, one of the prosecutors, joined; and said, “that if mercy could be extended to the prisoner, they should feel a higher degree of satisfaction in the course which they had adopted than they should if the severity of the law were inflicted.”

The stern countenance of the judge underwent no change by these recommendations of mercy; and arraying himself in the terrible badge of his office, he turned to the prisoner, and asked what he had to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon him? “My Lord,” said the prisoner, who wept while he spoke, and whose voice faltered as he gave utterance to his simple and pathetic address, “I humbly beg to represent to your Lordship, that I am a young man, very young in years; I am a husband, and a father. My friends and connections are very respectable, and so were my honoured parents; but they are dead. If my life be spared, I will devote it to the cause of virtue, and train up my children in the same course. But if it be taken from me, they will be left without a father—my wife without a protector; and I shall be hurried, with the guilt of all my manifold sins, into the presence of the Judge eternal, whom I am not prepared to meet. I therefore trust to the humanity of your Lordship, and humbly pray, that the claims of justice may not render the recommendations of mercy on my behalf altogether unavailing.”

The court was crowded to excess, and the greatest interest was excited on hearing the address, which was delivered with every feeling becoming the perilous situation of the prisoner. Many were bathed in tears; and during the long pause which ensued, a gleam of hope broke in upon the awful gloom and depression of the court; which, alas! was soon banished by the judge, who proceeded to pass sentence.—

“JOHN PHILLIPS, I wish, consistently with my duty, I could have attended to the recommendations of mercy made for you by the jury, and the prosecutor; and I wish I could attend to the very feeling appeal you have just now made. It would give me the highest satisfaction if I could hold out to you any reasonable expectation of hope; but your offence is of that nature I cannot

do it. The law may be severe, but it is not my province to alter it: I have only to superintend its administration, which I wish to do in an impartial and conscientious manner. The offence with which you are charged, and of which you have been found guilty by an enlightened and humane jury, is one so easily committed, and is one of so much importance in this commercial country, that I should be demeaning myself most improperly if I did not turn away from those recommendations of mercy which have been given on your behalf, and the force of that appeal which you have not improperly made to my feelings, and let justice take its course. You are young; but old enough to weigh the consequences of your own actions. You are a husband, and a father; and this is an aggravation, rather than an extenuation of your guilt; because the claims which they have on you should have operated as a restraint on your evil dispositions. If your age, or your rank, or your having a wife and children, should be allowed to operate to mitigate a capital offence of this kind, no person can doubt but that it would be an encouragement to others to commit the same offence. In your case, I am sorry to say, evil propensities have gradually led you from one crime to another, till at length you committed that for which you have now to suffer. I have a duty to perform to the public; and unpleasant as it is to me, I feel I should not act honestly if I were to hold out any reasonable hope of mercy to you. But though you are denied mercy at the tribunal of your country, you may obtain it at the throne of the heavenly grace; for with the Lord there is mercy that he may be feared, and plenteous redemption that he may be sought unto. I exhort you to turn your thoughts to another and a better world, as you have not long to live in this." His Lordship then sentenced him to death in the usual terms. He listened to this solemn address with profound attention; and when the fatal sentence was pronounced he wept, bowed respectfully to his judge, and was led out of court, supported by two officers, amidst the sighs and sympathies of the whole audience.

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

THE PROGRESS OF VICE.

PART III.



“They embraced each other—took another—and another parting kiss—moved away, and again returned, for another—and yet another embrace; till, mutually strengthened by the power of the Almighty, they shook hands with an averted face—uttered the final farewell—turned round and embraced each other once more—and separated in silence.” Page 11.

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THE PROGRESS OF VICE.

PART III.

"This cell hath taught me many a hidden thing;
I have become acquainted with my soul
Through midnight silence, and through lonely days;
Silent as midnight. I have found therein
A well of waters, undisturbed and deep,
Of sustenance, refreshment, and repose." *Wilson.*

BUT though the judge refused to comply with the recommendations of the jury and the prosecutors in behalf of Phillips, his friends indulged the hope of being able to save his life by appealing to the royal mercy. A petition was drawn up, and delivered to the Secretary of State, to be forwarded to his Majesty; but the following reply, which was received within the space of a few days, convinced them that he was doomed to suffer.

"SIR,

"The petition which has been put into my hands, on behalf of John Phillips, I have forwarded to his Majesty; and I am commissioned to inform you, that his Majesty cannot comply with the prayer of it. The facility with which the crime can be committed, and its importance, when viewed in relation to the commercial interests of the country, combine to render it absolutely necessary that the law should inflict its heaviest penalty on the perpetrator of it. I feel the tenderest sympathy for Mrs. Phillips, and her hapless children, and regret that it is not in my power to avert the impending evil, which will soon deprive them of their nearest earthly friend. May God bless them.

"I remain, Sir," &c.

To G. Lea, Esq.

Mr. Llewellyn had been unremitting in his attention to the unfortunate prisoner from the period of his commitment; and as he was requested to inform him of the result of this application, I consented to accompany him. He received the communication with more firmness than we expected; yet he could not refrain from weeping when he adverted to his wife and children. "I have, Sir," he remarked, "one of the best wives that ever

strove to make a husband happy, and four of the most lovely children a father ever embraced; but my crimes have made my wife a widow, and left my children fatherless." "Your crime," I observed, "is less heinous than that of murder, for which some of your fellow-prisoners are about to suffer; and though it is visited by the same punishment, yet it will not affix the same degree of infamy to your memory, nor entail the same degree of disgrace on your family." "Very true, Sir," he replied; "the law is too severe. If my life were spared, I might retrieve my reputation, and become a virtuous member of society; but justice must now take its course, and I must prepare to stand before a higher tribunal, where I shall have to meet a greater number of charges." He paused. He paced backwards and forwards the room; his eyes were fixed on the ground; he seemed absorbed in deep and anxious thought. At length he clasped his hands together, and looking at me, he said, "I am not prepared, Sir, to meet the Judge in whose presence I am soon to appear. Oh no! I shall be hurried into his presence with an awful load of guilt on my conscience. I have spent a large fortune; I have broken up the peace of a happy family; I have forfeited my life to the violated laws of my country; and now I fear that a still worse doom awaits me!" "You admit, Sir, I presume, the truth of the scriptural representations of another world, and of the certainty of a future judgment." "O yes, Sir," he replied, "I do admit them to be true. I have had my doubts on these subjects, but I never could become an infidel. My belief has been shaken, but never destroyed. I have often endeavoured to shake off those deep and pungent convictions of the truth of Christianity which I received when coolly investigating the question about ten years since, but I never could succeed. Yes, Sir, I believe that I shall soon, very soon, have to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, to give an account of the whole of my conduct." "Well, Sir," I replied, "the same volume which reveals the certainty of the future judgment, announces to us the consolatory fact, that *if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins.*" "Yes, Sir," he replied, "I know that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; but I candidly con-

fess that, that fact gives me no more consolation, even at this moment, than any other fact which is recorded in the page of history." "You admit, Sir, that you have sinned against God, and that you stand justly condemned for your transgressions." "I do, Sir. My conscience condemns me; which, I believe, is a faithful echo of the righteous sentence which stands recorded against me in heaven." "But he against whom you have sinned," I remarked, "is merciful. He willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he turn from his wickedness, and live." "But how, Sir, can I turn? I am stopped in my career of wickedness, and shall soon come to the fatal platform; but I still retain all my former propensities to evil. I regret that I committed the crime against the laws of my country; but I cannot feel any deep repentance of soul for the crimes I have committed against God. And if the justice of human law renders the exercise of mercy impossible, what hope can I indulge when anticipating my appearance before a more righteous tribunal?" "But God," I replied, "has devised a scheme by which he can maintain the honour of his law, and satisfy the claims of justice, while he exercises his mercy in the forgiveness of sin. Suppose," I added, "the constitution of human society admitted of one person dying for the sins committed by another, and you could procure a substitute, you perceive with what ease the claims of justice would be satisfied, even though you were restored to the bosom of your family." This reference to his family sprang a mine of tender feeling in his breast, and after dropping the tributary tear of affection, he replied, "I understand you, Sir." "*Jesus Christ*," I remarked, "*hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. His death was an expiatory sacrifice for the sins of man; and now, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" And having died to redeem us from the tremendous curse of that holy law which we have broken, he ascended to heaven, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us. Hence saith the apostle, *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.* The chief of sinners have obtained mercy, and are now mingling their praises together in the heavenly world; and so

may you. Your earthly judge refused to shew you mercy, though solicited by the jury that found you guilty; and your petition for mercy has been rejected by your sovereign; but if you make your appeal to God, relying for acceptance on the death and intercession of the Redeemer, he will not refuse you. He delighteth in mercy." "Do you think, Sir," he asked, with an intense degree of earnestness, "that ever any human being ascended from the platform of a public execution to heaven?" "Yes. You have read, I presume, the account of the dying malefactor, which is recorded in the Scriptures." "If I have, Sir," he replied, "I now forget it." I then opened my Bible, and read it to him. "*And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*" Here is one doomed to suffer an ignominious death—so hardened in sin that he reproached and insulted * the Redeemer, who was hanging by his side,—and yet, when he felt the deep convictions of guilt, and implored mercy, he was forgiven, and spent the evening of that gloomy day in the celestial paradise. What a change! In the morning he was in his cell; at noon the terrors of death were falling upon him; at night he was uniting with the rest of the redeemed, singing in the sweetest melody of praise—the lovely anthem of the heavenly temple, *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*" He listened to this deeply interesting fact with the most profound attention, and then remarked, "This malefactor had one privilege which I shall not enjoy. The Saviour was with him; he could make his appeal to his tender sympathy in person. But I am to

* The evangelist Mark says, *And they that were crucified with him railed him.*

die alone. There will be no Saviour with me on the fatal platform, from whose lips I can receive the promise of future bliss." "There will be," I remarked, "no Saviour with you, whom you can see or hear; but his visible presence is not necessary to render your supplications availing. He can see you, when enveloped in the cheerless gloom of your cell; he can hear you, when presenting your secret prayers; he can support you with the consolations of his presence, though he remain unseen; and will save you from the bitter pangs of the second death, if you believe in him." "What, Sir, must I do? A few days will decide my fate for ever. I feel the terror of my condition. I shall never more look on earth, except" * * * he burst into tears. When he became more composed he said, "I could meet death with fortitude, if I could indulge a hope of a blissful immortality; but I dread standing before that tribunal from whence I shall be compelled to depart—oh eternity!—eternity!—eternity!—how I dread eternity!" "You must pray, Sir, to him, who is exalted to give repentance and remission of sin." "But will he hear me?" "He has said, *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*" We knelt down, and prayed:—"O thou that hearest prayer! permit us, we humbly beseech thee, to approach thy footstool, through the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are sinful and depraved creatures; we have transgressed thy holy laws; we have justly incurred thy displeasure; and if thou wert to banish us from thy presence, and consign us to the blackness of darkness for ever, thou wouldst not punish us beyond the demerit of our crimes. *We acknowledge our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us.* We thank thee, O Lord, *that thou hast so loved the world, that thou gavest thine only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Look down, we earnestly beseech thee, on our brother, who is now doomed to die, and prepare him for the awful scene through which he has now to pass. Keep his mind calm and composed. Suffer him not to be distracted by the cares of this world, or overpowered by the terrors of the next. Enlighten the eyes of his un-

derstanding, that he may perceive the evil of sin; and do thou, we humbly beseech thee, exhibit the truths of the Gospel, to him in such a clear and penetrating manner, that they may enter into his heart, producing repentance towards thee, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Thou hast been pleased to save the chief of sinners; and we trust thou wilt save him. Suffer him not to despair of thy mercy; suffer him not to sink into a state of mental indifference; but do thou cause the day star of hope to arise in his troubled soul, and give him grace to work out his salvation with fear and trembling. And when the last moment comes—that awful moment, at the approach of which nature shudders, and turns pale with anguish,—oh thou, who hast endured a more painful and ignominious death, condescend to be touched by the feeling of his infirmity, and grant unto him that degree of confidence in thy mercy, which will raise him above the fear of dying, and cheer him with the prospect of eternal life. And we most humbly beseech thee to bless his affectionate wife. Support her under this overwhelming affliction. May she find that peace in thee which an unfeeling world denies her. Be thou her friend. Watch over her rising charge, and preserve them from the snares of the wicked one; and may they, in the future days and years of their short life, fear, and serve, and honour thee. These supplications we humbly present unto thee, O thou Father of mercies, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom, with thyself, and Holy Spirit, we ascribe equal and everlasting praises. Amen."

We now left him, and on the following day I received the following letter.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"You will I hope excuse the liberty I now take, in soliciting the favour of your company as early as you can make it convenient. Your conversation yesterday has made a deep impression on my heart. It has opened before me a new scene—a delightful scene—a scene so captivating, that my mind begins to unloose itself from those bonds of hopeless misery in which it was held; and though I feel jealous lest I should catch at a premature hope, yet I feel that I cannot despair of mercy

When I look back on my past life, and retrace the steps which I have trodden—when I think on my dear departed parents, and of her, whom I most tenderly love, and the children she has borne me—when I bring before my imagination the prospect which opened before me a few years since, and then gaze on my present state of infamy and degradation, my heart sinks within me, and I cannot forbear giving utterance to the most poignant self-reproaches. I was beguiled into the path of ruin by a course of novel reading, which first vitiated my taste and then corrupted my principles; and though my union with my dear Amelia reclaimed me for a season, yet my heart remained unchanged. I became an easy prey to the wicked one. The theatre, the midnight tavern, the card party, the billiard table, weaned my affection from my once peaceful and happy home, and induced me to desert my wife and children for scenes of dissipation and crime. But now the end is come, and I trust, that in this receptacle of woe I shall be made wise unto salvation; and when cast off as too vile to tread the earth of my beloved country, it will please the Saviour of sinners to take me to dwell with him in the heavenly paradise. The case of the dying malefactor, to which you so feelingly called my attention, has encouraged me to pray, Lord, remember me now thou art in thy kingdom; and though no cheering voice breaks in upon the awful silence of this dreary abode, yet I feel a degree of comfort which astonishes me. Is this the dead calm of presumptuous confidence? or is it the tranquillity of a good hope through grace? Before you visited me, I was terrified by my fears, but now my hope alarms me, as I dread self-deception no less than utter despair. I will thank you to present my kind regards to my dear friend, Mr. Llewellyn, and if you can spare time to go and offer some few words of consolation to my dear wife, I trust that you will do it.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your unfortunate friend,

"JOHN PHILLIPS."

Cell, Newgate.

I hastened to see him. As soon as I entered his cell he took me by the hand, and said, "I am happy to see

you. The words which you spake to me yesterday have proved the words of consolation to my troubled spirit. The difficulties which stood in the way of my salvation are now removed. I thought I could not be saved because God is just; but now I perceive how he can maintain the honour of his justice, while he pardons the greatest transgressor. Oh! Sir, what a glorious scheme of redemption does the Gospel of Jesus Christ exhibit! How adapted to man, and yet man neglects it! How astonishing! What should I now do if it were not for such a method of salvation? I must perish in hopeless despair. Blessed be that God who has opened my eyes to see my danger, and led me to repose my confidence in Jesus Christ, who suffered the just for the unjust." "It gives me pleasure," I remarked, "to see the light of hope beaming upon you, and I trust that you will enjoy the consolations of mercy when you most need them."

We were now interrupted by the entrance of one of the keepers, who informed Mr. Phillips that his wife was waiting to see him. "Request her," he said, "to walk in." She entered, and they immediately rushed together, and remained for several minutes locked in each other's embrace, without being able to give utterance to any sounds but sobs, and heart-rending sighs, and groans. Ah! thought I, could the Senators of the land see this scene they would no longer suffer the sentence of death to stand as the punishment to be inflicted for the crime of forgery. Ah! thought I, could the humane and generous sovereign of the British people see this sight he would no more sign the death-warrant which cuts off the forger from the land of the living.

After their agonized grief had somewhat subsided, they sat down and became more composed. "I hope my dear," said Mrs. Phillips, "you will be able to meet your approaching death with the fortitude and resignation of a Christian." "I hope I shall," he replied, this gentleman (pointing to me) has brought me words of consolation. He has explained to me, how God can maintain the honour of his justice, and yet save the chief of sinners. I have implored forgiveness through the mediation of Jesus Christ; and though I have heard no voice saying unto me, Thou shalt be with me in Paradise, yet I feel a heavenly calm in my spirit which

no dread of death can disturb. If it were not for you and our dear babes, I could cheerfully quit a world which abounds with evil; but the infamy and misery which my crimes have entailed upon you make me unhappy." "But you know, my dear husband, we have an ample provision made for our support, and though some may frown, yet others will pity us, and we will cherish the hope of meeting you in a better world, where in each others' society we may enjoy uninterrupted felicity." "I have thought," he said, "of seeing my babes before I finally leave them, but my purpose is changed, as I now wish to keep my mind entirely disengaged from every circumstance which may tend to agitate it. You will, I have no doubt prove a kind and affectionate mother, but let me beseech you not to suffer your maternal affection to overcome the dictates of your enlightened judgment. Endeavour to make them happy, but never let them have too much money, as it is to that I attribute all my misfortunes. Train them up in the fear of God; teach them to reverence the Scriptures, and to keep holy the Sabbath-day; and when they know the fate of their unhappy father, employ it as a powerful argument to deter them from associating with men of depraved principles."

We knelt down and prayed. It was a solemn service. Many tears were shed. We arose to part, but neither the pen nor the pencil, however directed by talent, can describe this affecting scene. They stood near each other for some time in profound silence, as they both knew that they should never meet again on earth, though neither of them had fortitude enough to allude to it. At length he said, "When, my dear, do you go into the country?" "To-morrow," she replied, attempting to suppress the sigh that heaved her grief-worn bosom; but she could not succeed—she burst into a flood of tears which gave her relief. They embraced each other—took another—and another parting kiss—moved away, and again returned, for another—and yet another embrace; till, mutually strengthened by the power of the Almighty, they shook hands with an averted face—uttered the final farewell—turned round and embraced each other once more—and separated in silence.

On the morning of the execution Mr. Phillips was

removed from his sleeping apartment a little before six o'clock into the large room, where he had the melancholy pleasure of seeing his old friend, Mr. Llewellyn. He took him by the hand, and said, "My departure is at hand." "And I hope, Sir," Mr. Llewellyn replied, "you can add, I am ready to be offered up." "I hope, Sir, I can; but it behoves me to speak with caution. You know what a sinner I have been; but as God can be just even while he saves the unrighteous, I do not despair." After some further conversation we sang the fifty-first Psalm; and when singing the last verse he closed his eyes, and sung with a plaintive melody of voice which surpassed any sounds I had ever heard.

"Yet save a trembling sinner, Lord,
Whose hope, still hovering round thy word,
Would light on some sweet promise there,
Some sure support against despair."

About half past seven the Ordinary of the prison administered the sacrament, which he received with deep solemnity of manner; and as soon as he arose the sheriffs and their attendants entered the room, and proceeded to bind their victim. He stood firm; and though, when first touched by the minister of death, his face turned pale, yet it soon regained its fine healthful complexion, and he appeared composed. When this painful part of the ceremony was completed, the solemn procession began to move through the avenues of the gloomy mansion—the bell commenced tolling—and the Ordinary read part of the burial service;—"I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord," &c. He ascended the scaffold, and looked round on the immense multitude, that were assembled to see him expire, heaving an involuntary sigh. No voice was heard—no head was covered—no countenance wore a smile. "I die, Sir," he said, addressing me, "depending on the atonement of Jesus Christ for eternal life; and I hope, that He who took the crucified malefactor from the cross to paradise, will permit me to ascend from this platform of ignominy into his gracious presence." Every thing being adjusted, the fatal bell was drawn, and he was launched into eternity. When he fell the multitude turned away from the sight, to shed the tear of pity, and condemn the severity of that law which makes no distinction, in its infliction of

punishment, between the man who defrauds another of his property, and the cold-blooded assassin who reeks his dagger in the warm blood of his brother's life.

Thus terminated the career of John Phillips, in the thirty-third year of his age. A young man of a fine and beautiful figure—endowed with a superior mind—descended from respectable parents, who left him a large fortune—blest with an amiable and intelligent wife, and four lovely children—but, having been corrupted by the pernicious reading of the age, and seduced from the path of virtue by the wicked spirits who move about seeking whom they can destroy, he burst through every obligation to a virtuous and religious life, till at length the terrors of an untimely death fell upon him. What a warning does his history give to the young, to avoid the snares which are laid for their destruction! As these numbers may fall into the hands of some who have been enticed, by the persuasion and example of others, to scenes of gaiety and dissipation, let me beseech you to forsake their society—retrace your steps—and once more return to the order and purity of domestic life. If you venture to walk in a course of sin, you will advance in crime; and though, at the present hour, nothing may be further from your intention than violating those laws which may place your life in jeopardy, yet, when evil habits are formed, you may, like others, become so hardened in sin, as to treat with fearless levity the tremendous consequences to which you may, in an unguarded moment, expose yourself. Throw away the unhallowed volume which is imperceptibly working a moral death to all your religious principles and impressions; tear yourself away from the alluring scene which is carrying on, unfelt, a process of moral corruption; and abandon the company of those who are the swift messengers of destruction; lest the evil day should come upon you, when either poverty, or reproach, or imprisonment, or an untimely grave may be the just reward of your deeds.

[No. 58.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

ON NEGRO SLAVERY.

PART II.



"She was the mother of children to her husband, and they lived together in a comfortable way. The woman declared herself unwilling to sacrifice her own honour, and her husband's happiness; but the orders of the overseer were to be obeyed, and she was obliged to live with him." Page 3.

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1824.

ON NEGRO SLAVERY.

PART II.

"A Briton to compare the state of a West Indian slave with that of an English freeman, and to give the former the preference! It is to imply an utter insensibility of the native feelings and moral dignity of man, no less than of the rights of Englishmen!! I will not condescend to argue this question, as I might, on the ground of comparative feeding, and clothing, and lodging, and medical attendance. Are these the only claims? are these the chief privileges of a rational and immortal being? Is the consciousness of personal independence nothing? Are self-possession and self-government nothing? Is it of no account, that our persons are inviolate by any private authority, and that the whip is placed only in the hands of the public executioner? Is it of no value, that we have the power of pursuing the occupation, and the habits of life which we prefer? that we have the prospect, or at least the hope, of improving our condition, and of rising, as we have seen others rise, from poverty and obscurity, to comfort, and opulence, and distinction? Again; are all the charities of the heart, which arise out of the domestic relations, to be considered as nothing?—and I may add, all their security too, among men who are free agents, and not vendible chattels, liable continually to be torn from their dearest connections, and sent into a perpetual exile? Are husband and wife, parent and child, terms of no meaning?" *Wilberforce.*

Mr. Foster. "I do not hesitate to confess, Sir, that a state of slavery is a state of personal degradation, and that those who are reduced to it must be exposed to various hardships and sufferings; but at the same time it is my decided opinion, that the descriptions which have been given us of the cruelties and atrocities committed in the West Indies are very much exaggerated. The slaves are sometimes whipped and imprisoned; but are not Englishmen? and if, on some occasions, they do not obtain that redress in a court of law to which impartial justice would consider them entitled, yet have we never condemned the laws of our own country, as not affording us that protection from insult, and even oppression, which we have sought for? But, Sir, is it fair to select solitary instances of cruelty and of crime, and hold them up to the public eye as specimens of the treatment to which all our slave population are exposed?"

Mr. Wilcox. "But you will permit me to observe, that all the slave population are exposed to every species of cruelty; and if they are not the victims of oppression, it must be attributed, not to the protection of the law, but the humanity of the overseer. And as these men are in the habit of regarding the Negroes as an inferior class of beings, created, and perpetuated in existence for the purpose of slavery, we cannot imagine that much of the milk of human kindness will ever flow in their breasts towards them. Indeed it is well known that, with some honourable exceptions, they as often corrupt the morals of the poor slaves by their licentiousness, as they torture their bodies by the whip, and their feelings by brutal severity; and while the law continues to shield them from merited punishment, we can never calculate on ameliorating their condition."

Mr. Foster. "But, Sir, the law does not shield them from merited punishment; it leaves them exposed to its infliction."

"But, Sir," I remarked, "the laws of the West Indies hardly suppose it possible that any crime can be committed against a Negro. In this country the crime of adultery is reprobated, and punishable; and *no man* can force a female to live with him, while her own husband works for him. But if we attend to the testimony of Dr. Williamson, we shall perceive with what audacity and impunity it may be practised by a West Indian overseer. 'The overseer of an estate,' says Dr. W. indulged a disposition to amorous connection with a handsome Negro woman, the adopted wife of a Negro cooper, with whom she had lived as such for some time. She was the mother of children to her husband, and they lived together in a comfortable way. The woman declared herself unwilling to sacrifice her own honour, and her husband's happiness; but the orders of the overseer were to be obeyed, and she was obliged to live with him. It is painful to me to be obliged to add,' says Dr. Williamson, 'that the woman's husband became the object of his resentment. He was annoyed for having expressed discontent at such an invasion of his happiness. His life became a burden; and though his wife was the companion of the overseer's bed, plots for his destruction were contemplated by the woman

and her injured husband.' Arsenic was mixed in lemonade for the overseer. He perceived the metallic taste, and did not drink of it; a book-keeper took a draught of it, which produced uneasy sensations; but a brisk emetic being administered prevented fatal consequences. After an inquiry, 'it was pretty clearly ascertained, that the Negro woman seduced from her husband had mixed the dose,' hoping that the overseer would have been 'the just object of vengeance by forfeiting his life.' Dr. Williamson proceeds no further with the story. He does not inform us what became either of the Negroes or the overseer. It was due to the character of the country to have stated this. In a subsequent part of his work he again briefly adverts to the occurrence, but without attempting to satisfy our curiosity as to the fate of the parties concerned. He founds on it, indeed, a salutary monition to the Whites, against pursuing the gratification of their licentious appetites by the exercise of authority; and states it as his opinion, that nothing operates more injuriously on the comfort of the Negro women than such cruel invasions of their domestic enjoyments.

"Now let us look at this individual case of adultery, as it will throw open before us the present degraded state of our West Indian colonies. Here are two Negroes, the one a male, the other a female, unjustly deprived of their liberty—compelled to work, day and night, under the lash of the whip—without any prospect of ever regaining their liberty. They form a virtuous attachment for each other in this land of oppression—live together as man and wife—children are born unto them—and they feel, in the enjoyment of these social affections, some mitigation of their sorrows. If they had resided in England, the law would have given perpetuity to their domestic bliss; but alas! they lived where no law guards the Negro from the inroads of his rapacious oppressor, and the husband is compelled to give up the wife of his youth to the unhallowed embraces of a man who is too powerful to be resisted. And yet we are told, that these poor oppressed people are treated with kindness—with great humanity—with impartial justice; and that their condition is equal, nay, superior to the condition of most of our European peo-

sanctity. But from whose lips does this report of their kind treatment, and happy and blissful condition proceed? From themselves? Do they stand up in mass, and say that they are happy? Do they urge us not to press their emancipation, lest we should conduct them out of these Elysian fields of bliss—this paradisaical state of purity and innocence, into the mortifying, and revolting, and miserable condition of free men? Oh no! This report comes from their inhuman oppressors—the invaders of their conjugal affection—the destroyers of their social bliss; and being given in direct opposition to facts, which decency cannot fully relate, and at the recital of which the feelings of humanity would recoil, supplies us with a decisive proof, that their testimony is entitled to no more belief, than their system is to toleration. Allow me to ask you, Sir, what peasant in England, whose breast glows with a pure affection for his wife, would allow his master to seize her by force, and then retain her in his possession?”

Mr. Foster. “This is certainly a most daring attack on the sanctity of domestic life; and no one can hear it without regretting, that human nature in a civilized state could be guilty of it. This, I have no doubt, like most of the facts which are stated, is a solitary instance of its kind—a departure from the custom which prevails amongst the white people; as it must be to their interest to guard the morals, no less than the health and life of their slaves.”

“No, Sir, it is not a solitary instance of its kind—not a mere accidental departure from the custom which prevails amongst the overseers and managers of estates; for such is the depravity which prevails amongst them, and such the boundless authority which they possess over the poor Negroes, that there is no law to guard the chastity of the female, nor avenge the insult which is offered to her violated honour. There, as in Africa, the youthful bosom may glow with a pure and ardent attachment; and the natives of the same soil, and the slaves of the same gang, may pledge themselves to fidelity as man and wife; and look down with some degree of social pleasure on the children which may be born unto them;—but what security have they for the continuance of their domestic comfort? None. While

they are resting from their labours, and soothing each other's lacerated minds with expressions of mutual attachment; while they are caressing their lovely offspring, (for Negroes love their children,) and expressing some devout wish, that they may live, and labour, and die, and perish together; the keen-scented adulterer may be prowling, like a beast of prey, round their hut—the murderer of their bliss may be entering their undefended dwelling; and having glanced his victim, she is compelled to go off to a worse state of torture than a cruel death, while the husband, paralyzed and powerless, can neither resist nor speak. And who is the adulterer? who the murderer of conjugal felicity? Who?—The man who *calls himself a Christian*—and who sends to us his reports of the happiness and contentment of the Negroes, and the kindness and justice with which he treats them.”

Mr. Foster. I cannot, Sir, attempt either to justify or palliate such daring acts of outrage on the principles of justice, and feelings of humanity; yet I cannot help thinking that, notwithstanding the contempt in which the Negroes are held in the West Indies, justice is administered with an impartial hand when their oppressors are convicted.”

“Indeed, Sir,” I remarked, “you must permit me to question the correctness of such a statement. In a letter which Earl Bathurst received, in 1816, from Col. Arthur, there is the following statement, which shews what punishment a jury awards, even when compelled to find an offender guilty.

“At a meeting of the Magistrates at the Court House, Belize, River's Mouth, in Honduras, Thursday, August 29th, 1816.—Present, Marshall Bennett, Thomas Paslow, and Thomas Frain, Esquires.

“J. B. Ratabeau came before the magistrates, and stated upon oath as follows:—The day before yesterday I was at Mr. Orgill's, about half past twelve o'clock, and I heard somebody was crawling in Mr. Carty's yard; Mr. Orgill told me it was Mr. Carty that was flogging one of his wenches, and which was the third time that day. I went from the house into Mr. Orgill's yard, with Mr. Orgill, and Joseph Belisle, and looked

into Mr. Carty's yard, and I saw a girl, which Mr. Carty brought from Mrs. Burn's, on the ground; her two hands were tied to her feet, and a stick run under her knees, and above the elbow-bend of the arm, and lying on her back perfectly naked, and he, Mr. Carty, was flogging her with a cat. After flogging her some time on her buttocks, he came round and struck her ten or twelve stripes over her breast and face; and after his flogging her thus, he called another woman of his, and made her hold one end of the stick, and he, Mr. Carty, took hold of the other, and he turned her from lying on her back over her head, when she fell nearly on her face, and then he flogged her again on her buttocks. After this I went away, and some time after returned, when I saw Mr. Carty flog the girl again, in the same position and manner as before. I was then in company with Mr. Orgill, Joseph Belisle, Martha Sloasher, Jeremiah Myvett, William Adams, and John M'Gregor, who all saw the same. After this I went away, and about five o'clock returned to Mr. Orgill, and saw the girl fastened in the same position.

"The magistrates and officers of the court then examined the woman Quasheba, who appeared to have been much flogged, and her wrists much cut, apparently from having been tied, and had a large cattle-chain fastened about her neck with a padlock.

"John Antonia Portall sworn, and John M'Gregor sworn as interpreter:—Deposes, that he saw the girl Quasheba when tied, and saw her being punished by Mr. Carty; that he sent his mate and the boatswain, who could talk English, to beg for the girl; that they went in, and Mr. Carty said he would forgive her, but would put her in chains; and this was about half past four o'clock."

"Now conceive a young female, her hands tied to her feet, a stick run under her knees, and above the elbow-bend of her arm, and a merciless villain flogging her with a cat, on the breast, the face, and every part of her body; and, as if insatiable in his barbarity, calling another woman of his, and making her hold one end of the stick, he holding the other, and thus turning her from lying on her back over her head, when she fell nearly on her face; and then he flogging her again, in

a manner too shocking, too brutal, too indecent for me to read. One witness saw this at half past twelve o'clock, and in that position he saw her again at five o'clock.

"Observe, too, not only the intensity of the punishment, but how often it was repeated. The same witness, Mr. Ratabeau, says, that at half past twelve o'clock Mr. Carty was flogging his wench for the third time that day. Another witness, M'Gregor, saw her tied in the same manner on the same spot at four o'clock, and Carty flogging her. Another witness, J. A. Portall, saw her undergoing this punishment at half past four o'clock. At five o'clock she is seen, for the last time that day, in the same position. Two days after, the '*wench*' is brought before the magistrates, much flogged, much cut, with 'a large cattle-chain fastened about her neck with a padlock.'

"On Carty's trial all this is proved,—and what exemplary infliction awaits him? Let gentlemen consider his guilt, and what measure of punishment they, or any men with feelings unblunted by slavery, would have dealt out to the convicted monster. Hear his sentence, in the words of Col. Arthur:—

"'Convicted of all this load of enormity; with the unfortunate young female before their eyes, lacerated in a manner the recital of which is shocking to humanity; her wounds festered to such a degree that her life was considered in the greatest danger; still this picture of human misery, and human depravity, could not rouse a Honduras jury to award such a punishment against the offender, (whom they found guilty to the utmost extent,) as bespoke their commiseration for the former, or their detestation of the latter. Fifty pounds, Jamaica currency, equal to about thirty-five pounds sterling, was the penalty deemed adequate to the crimes of the offender!—a man in affluent circumstances, worth thousands of pounds; and the poor female was doomed to remain the slave of this cruel wretch, still more exasperated against her than ever.'

"I know not whether the act itself is more enormous than the verdict. The act might only speak the cruelty of an individual; the verdict betrays the tenor of *feeling* towards slaves which prevails among the leading

persons in the colony, the magistrates on the bench. Yes, Sir, it tells us, in language which cannot be mistaken, the degree of protection which the laws afford to the Negro, and the equal-handed justice which is dealt out between the slave and the master. Aye, and what a comment is it upon 'the enjoyments and advantages of the slave population of Honduras,—a race of people truly to be envied by free labourers all over the world!' O wretched peasantry of England! how would you mourn your fate, if you knew the comforts of which you are debarred—the indulgencies, denied indeed to you, but dealt out so liberally to the contented African in that terrestrial paradise for slaves,—Honduras!

"The testimony of a Mr. Stewart, an eye-witness of the state of things which he describes, is given in such a concise and forcible manner, that I cannot suppress it without doing violence to my own feelings.

"It may truly be said, that the treatment of the slave depends, in a great measure, upon the character and temper of his master or manager. How ineffectual to the slaves are humane and judicious laws, if a barbarous master or overseer has it in his power to evade them in various ways! There can be no hesitation in saying, that the slave who lives under the immediate superintendence of a humane and considerate master, enjoys a life of as much comfort and contentment as *the condition of a slave is capable of*. This, perhaps, is the utmost that can be said: for though the wants of the slave may be supplied by the beneficent provisions of such a master, and he may, consequently, be said to be, so far, more desirably situated than many of the poorer peasantry of Great Britain; yet to argue generally, that he is happier than they, an assertion which one frequently hears, is certainly saying too much.' 'But very differently situated is the poor slave who is doomed to toil for a master of a character directly opposite to the foregoing.' 'Undoubtedly this is a state of grievous hardship. It may be said, that there are few masters of the character here described. It were to be wished it were so; but men's hearts are not likely to be softened by habits of too uncontrolled dominion over their fellow-men. With respect to interest prevailing over a disposition to oppress; while we allow all due weight to this

motive, in the prudent and judicious owner, it will not always counteract the petty injustice to which the slave is subject, from ignorant masters, and unfeeling overseers. A slave may complain, and justly complain, that he is made to labour at unseasonable hours, and on days which the law allots to him; and that he is neither fed nor clothed as the law directs; but who is to prove these transgressions? The slave cannot; for the law does not recognize the validity of his testimony against a white man. If the master were put upon his oath, equally nugatory would be this expedient; for the man who wants rectitude and feeling to be just to his slaves, will hardly scruple to serve his ends by perjury. Again; if a slave is punished or beat with improper and illegal severity, or even cut and maimed,—not to mention the numerous acts of petty tyranny to which he is subject under a cruel master,—and there is no legal evidence to prove those enormities, the offender cannot be convicted of them. He may, then, go on with impunity in this system of oppression, as long as he can contrive to keep without the reach of the laws. Extreme cases of this nature, it may be said, seldom occur; but such a supposition is no argument that the law should not provide effectually against them. Even murder may escape condign punishment, while this defect in the slave laws is suffered to exist. There is only one way of removing this obstacle to the more effectual amelioration of the condition of the slave; and that is, by rendering his evidence, under certain modifications, legally admissible against Whites. Such an innovation would, indeed, probably raise an outcry among a certain class of persons, who see danger in every boon of kindness extended to the slaves; but a day will arrive, when it will be a subject of wonder, even in the West Indies, that human beings should have been precluded the means of procuring legal redress against injury and oppression; that *the shadow and mockery of justice* should have been held out to them, while an insuperable bar was placed between them and the reality.

“On the trial of a Mr. Bowen, a senior magistrate of Honduras, for the inhuman punishment of one of his own slaves, the following circumstances Colonel Arthur, the Governor of the island, who was in court during the

trial, states, in his dispatches to Earl Bathurst, were clearly and distinctly proved, indeed not denied :—

“That on the bare suspicion of having made away with some handkerchiefs committed to her care to dispose of, a poor female slave was tied up by order of her owner, and severely flogged, and then handcuffed and shackled, placed in an old store infested with vermin, and the noisome flies of this country. After being in this situation for five days and nights, Serjeant Rush, a military pensioner, interceded with Mr. Bowen for her release; and having pledged himself, if the handkerchiefs were not found, to pay the exorbitant sum demanded, the poor creature was liberated on Sunday, about mid-day. On the following morning she left her owner's house, to make her complaint, and seek redress: for this, and on no other ground whatever, she was again seized upon, tied down on her belly to the ground, her arms and legs being stretched out, and secured to four stakes with sharp cords; and in this shocking attitude, in the heat of the sun, exposed before the men in a perfect state of nature, she was again severely flogged, in presence of her inhuman master and his brother, upon her back and posteriors, and then sent back to her place of torment, and there again confined in handcuffs and chains, and subsisted on the wretched pittance of twenty plantains, and two mackrel per week, for above fourteen days. Occasionally, indeed, it appeared, the miserable being, was led out by day, and chained to a tree in the yard, and there compelled to wash.’ What punishment was inflicted on this unrighteous and unmerciful magistrate, for his cruel conduct? What? ‘This was an offence,’ to quote the language of the dispatch, ‘for which the magistrates could find no law on which to charge the jury, nor the jury any under which to find the prisoner guilty.’

“The following instance of cruelty, which is given by an eye-witness, the Rev. Mr. Gilgras, a Methodist Missionary, ought to be reported through the whole civilized world, to excite universal sympathy on behalf of the poor oppressed Negroes.

“A master of slaves, who lived near us in Kingston, Jamaica, exercised his barbarities on a Sabbath morning, while we were worshipping God in the chapel; and the

cries of the female sufferers have frequently interrupted us in our devotions. But there was no redress for them or for us. This man wanted money, and one of the female slaves having two fine children he sold one of them, and the child was torn from her maternal affection. In the agony of her feelings she made a hideous howling, and for that crime was flogged. Soon after he sold her other child. This "turned her heart within her," and impelled her into a kind of madness. She howled night and day in the yard—tore her hair—ran up and down the streets and the parade, rending the heavens with her cries, and literally watering the earth with her tears. Her constant cry was, "*Da wicked massa Jew, he sell my children. Will no Buckra massa pity Negar? What me do? Me no have one child!*" As she stood before the window she said, lifting up her hands towards heaven, "*My massa, do, my massa minister, pity me! My heart do so, (shaking herself violently,) my heart do so, because me have no child. Me go to massa house, in massa yard, and in my hut, and me no see 'em.*" And then her cry went up to God. (*Watson's Defence of the Methodists*, p. 26.)

"Can human beings who are thus oppressed and degraded, and whose few domestic comforts are liable to be torn from them by the shameless adulterer, be deemed happy? Can their state and condition be regarded as equal to that of the English peasantry? Indeed, who can avoid lifting up his voice in condemnation of the system under which they groan and expire?—who can refuse to intercede with the Government of the country for their speedy emancipation? Who? No one but the merciless men who are the agents of torture, or those who derive their wealth from the sweat of the Negro's brow. We have been silent long enough, while this daring outrage has been committed on the weak and the defenceless; and now it behoves us to speak out, in unqualified terms of reprobation and sympathy, if we wish to absolve ourselves from participating in the atrocious evil."

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

MISS HOLMES.

PART IV.



"I had gained that high—that elevated spot—that spiritual Pisgah, to which you so finely and beautifully allude, from whence I could read

'My title clear
'To mansions in the skies;'

and from whence I thought I should never be displaced; but alas! I am again compelled to give utterance to the plaintive notes of woe. I am again a mourning captive: my harp of praise is again unstrung and suspended on the willow; and beside the running stream, I am compelled once more to sit down and weep."

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1824.

MISS HOLMES.

PART IV.

"If I have a good hope through grace, I desire rationally and scripturally to account for it. At least I am anxious to ascertain, whether I possess unequivocal evidence, that I am an acceptable being in the sight of God?" Aton.

THE change which had taken place in Miss Holmes, became the topic of general conversation in the circle of her gay associates; and though some of them predicted that she would again intermingle with them, when *the fit of melancholy* was over, yet they were disappointed. She returned the calls of enquiry which had been made as soon as her health permitted; but she left a deep impression on the mind of all her friends, that the world had lost its charms, and that higher and nobler objects of pursuit now engrossed her attention. One of the first proofs of her decision, was, consenting to become a Secretary to a female branch of an Auxiliary Bible Society, which was established in the vicinity of the Elms; and which brought her into immediate connection with several pious families. Having derived so much spiritual benefit from the Scriptures during her long confinement, she felt anxious that the sacred volume should be universally circulated; and voluntarily devoted a large portion of her time, and all her influence, to secure the co-operation of others to accomplish such an important object.

One of the most conspicuous professors in her neighbourhood, was a Mr. Corrie, who had sat under the ministry of the celebrated Romaine for more than thirty years, and who held his memory in the highest estimation. Mr. Corrie was a widower, very far advanced in life, possessed of an handsome fortune; and who had residing with him, two maiden sisters, who were decidedly pious. These females were intelligent—refined in their manners—zealous and active in the cause of humanity and religion—catholic in their disposition—and whose chief delight was in going about doing good. They lived together in sweetest fellowship; and so completely were their minds imbued with the spirit of Christ, that

looked down with an eye of comparative indifference the tumultuous scenes of human ambition and folly, placing their affections placed on things above. Mr. Corrie usually spent his mornings in his study, while his sisters went forth on their visits of mercy to the aged of the poor and the needy; and in the evening passed away their time in conversing together on occurrences of the day, or in the graver habit of listening to each other. They generally read a portion of Mr. Romaine's Works, which they considered to be standard of orthodoxy; and though they were willing to submit every religious opinion to the test of the "law of the testimony" of the Scriptures, yet they never thought of subjecting his sentiments to such an ordeal. His treatise on the Life and the Walk of Faith, and some others which have been published since his decease, they regarded with almost as much reverence as they felt towards the Epistles of the inspired writers; and thought no author equalled him, in correctness of sentiment and depth of experience.

Miss Holmes, in her perambulations on behalf of the Bible Society, happened to call on the Misses Corrie, to solicit their subscriptions, just as the tea was brought into the parlour; and being pressed, she consented to spend the evening with them. Their cheerfulness—spirituality of mind which they discovered in their conversation—the fervent spirit of devotion which was apparent in Mr. Corrie when engaged in family prayer—and the confidence with which they spoke of their interest in Christ, and of their final salvation, acted so powerfully on her feelings, that she was unwilling to retire from the enchanting spot; and when the closeness of the hour compelled her to leave, she could do it without requesting permission to repeat her words. "We shall be happy to see you at any time," said Miss Corrie, "and if it be in our power to teach the way of the Lord more perfectly, we shall consider ourselves highly honoured."

Religious conversation is one of the most useful modes of instruction and consolation we can employ; sometimes, when a false standard of experience is set, it becomes the means of perplexing and distorting weak minds. Our Lord taught his disciples, as

they were able to receive instruction; keeping alive their attention—while he allayed the restlessness of an unprofitable curiosity, by saying—*I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.* And on this wise maxim the Holy Spirit condescends to conduct his process of instruction, that we may not be confounded by communications which we are unable to understand; but be led on step after step in the province of divine knowledge, till we are able to *comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God.* And it is of immense importance, in relation to the government of our conduct towards others, and in relation to ~~our~~ our own tranquillity and spiritual improvement, that we rigorously adhere to this maxim; or we may inflict a wound, while attempting to impart the consolations of our faith, and absolutely retard that growth in knowledge which we deem essential to our happiness.

Mr. Corrie was a man of a rather weak understanding—eminently pious—who had associated with very few intelligent Christians in the earlier part of his life; so that his first undigested sentiments grew up into firm and immoveable opinions; and though he devoted a large portion of his time to reading the Scriptures, yet, owing to the bias of which he was not conscious, he more generally searched for passages in support of his own peculiar notions, than to enlarge his views of the entire scheme of redemption. He was positive, but not perverse; inflexibly attached to his own belief, but not disposed to inveigh against that of another; and though he imbibed some religious principles which have, in their operation, done great injury to the amiability of the Christian character, and the peace of the church, yet in him their tendency was neutralized by the sweetness of his natural disposition, combined with the fervour of his devotional spirit. He dwelt much, in his conversation, on the high points of election and predestination; maintained with great pertinacity that human

nature undergoes no moral improvement, but remains as impure and deceitful after the great renovation has taken place, as before; and considered an assurance of our final salvation so essential to the nature of faith, that he would not admit a person possessed the principle, who did not enjoy an unclouded prospect of eternal glory. These topics bounded the range of his enquiry; and though at times he would make concessions which involved their accuracy, yet when apprized of his danger, he would step back with singular adroitness, and resist the force of an argument to expose their fallacy, by saying to an antagonist, "*You see through a glass darkly, while I see face to face.*" Had he confined these subjects to the circle of his own family, or amongst those of his pious friends who had been educated in the same school, he would have done little injury, because their habits of devotion were a safeguard against their pernicious tendencies; but by bringing them forward in promiscuous society, and by holding them up as essential articles of the Christian faith, he often involved the judgment of the young disciple in the deepest perplexity, and unintentionally threw down some of those barriers which the Scriptures have raised, to restrain the evil propensities of the human heart. The effects of these sentiments on the mind of Miss Holmes may be seen in the following letter, which she addressed to her friend Mrs. Loader, a few weeks after her introduction to this family.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I received your last very kind letter, and should have replied to it earlier; but since my convalescence, I have been so engaged with my new duties, as the Secretary to our Auxiliary Bible Society, that I have not been able to find time. I cannot express to you in words, how much pleasure I received by the perusal of it. It came at a season when my mind was sinking into a state of deep despondency, and when I was tempted to give up my hope; but the Lord was pleased to employ it as the means of dispersing the shadows of darkness which were hovering around me, and I was enabled to rejoice in the light of his countenance. I had gained that high—that

elevated spot—that spiritual Pisgah, to which you so finely and beautifully allude; from whence I could read

‘My title clear
‘To mansions in the skies;’

and from whence I thought I should never be displaced; but alas! I am again compelled to give utterance to the plaintive notes of woe. I am again a mourning captive; my harp of praise is again unstrung, and suspended on the willow; and beside the running stream I am compelled once more to sit down and weep.

“I have lately formed an intimate friendship with two excellent females, who reside with their brother, not more than a quarter of a mile from the Elms; and in whose society I have spent a considerable portion of my leisure hours. From the influence of their example, and from their conversation, I anticipated much spiritual improvement; but the oftener I associate with them, the deeper I am plunged in mental despondency; and though I have ventured to allude, in indirect terms, to the perplexed state of my mind, yet I cannot obtain from them those sweet words of consolation which I need. They, with their brother, sat under the ministry of the celebrated Romaine; and hold his memory in such profound veneration, that they rank him amongst the inspired writers, and tacitly condemn all who, on any religious points, differ from him. They have very kindly lent me his treatise on the Life, and Walk of Faith, which I have read with close attention; but instead of deriving from it, that exquisite enjoyment which I was led to expect, it has revived all my former fears, and invested them with a ten-fold poignancy. He says, when addressing the believer, *‘Thou must be first persuaded of thine interest in Christ, before thou canst make use of it, and improve it; and therefore the knowledge of thy union with him must be clear and plain, before thou canst have a free and open communion with him.’* I might have passed over this passage, without having taken any particular notice of it, had it not coincided with the sentiment which has been so often expressed by my excellent friends, the Misses Corrie and their brother. They say, in the most express terms, that an assurance

of our interest in Christ, and of our final salvation, is essential to faith; so that I am cut off, even from hope. I have not this assurance. I can do nothing more than urge the plea of Peter—‘Lord save, or I perish.’ Sometimes I have thought that the Saviour has looked with an eye of compassion on me, and raised my desponding soul to the ineffable manifestations of his love; but I dare not say, that ‘*he gave himself for me.*’ I rely on the efficacy of his death for acceptance and eternal life; but I dare not say, that my dependence is genuine. In some favoured moments, I have anticipated ‘the blissful interview,’ when I have hoped to see him as he is, but I dare not speak with confidence—Oh no! I cannot. While my necessities compel me to go to the Saviour, and plead his promises, my want of assurance keeps me back; and thus, being suspended between these propelling and repulsive powers, I suffer extreme mental torture.

“But this is not the only subject on which my mind is perplexed. In a conversation the other evening, when we were tracing up the bestowment of every good, and every perfect gift to the free and unmerited grace of God, Mr. Corrie asserted with the utmost degree of confidence, that no true believer in Jesus Christ can doubt his personal election to eternal life. This assertion coming from the lips of so good and amiable a man, and which met the decided approbation of his very amiable sisters, fell upon my ear with all the terror of the condemning sentence; and from that moment to the present I have been driven, as an outcast, from the promises of mercy. I have read the Scriptures to satisfy my mind on this point, and there I read of sinners being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world—of their being elected according to the foreknowledge of God the Father—of their being predestinated; but this high point appears invested with such gloomy terror, that my spirit recoils when attempting to approach it; and though I have prayed for faith to receive the hidden mysteries of revelation, and for wisdom to understand them, yet I cannot believe that I am one of the selected number, whose name has been enrolled in the Lamb’s book of life, from before the birth of the visible creation. But should I feel all this terror on my spirit, when ad-

verting to a doctrine which appears stated, with the utmost degree of explicitness, by the inspired writers, if I had that faith which is of the operation of the Spirit of God? Should I recoil, with almost instinctive dread, from a subject on which my pious friends speak with so much animation and delight, if I possessed like precious faith? Surely there must be some defect in my experience, which renders me incapable of disengaging myself from the bondage of fear, in which I am held; and which holds me back from a participation of that glorious liberty in which I see the children of God walking around me.

"There is one point of resemblance between my experience, and that of my friends, too striking to pass unnoticed; yet, when reading the Scriptures, it has merely served to involve me in a still more perplexing labyrinth of difficulty. It is this;—they maintain 'that our hearts undergo no moral improvement when the great renovation takes place, but remain as impure and deceitful as before.' I certainly did anticipate, when I first felt the influence of the truth, that I should grow in grace and in knowledge; and that I should attain to a more near conformity to the image of Jesus Christ; but on a close and impartial examination, I am compelled to believe that I have made no progress: indeed, I fear I have made a retrograde movement. I do not feel that exquisite degree of bliss I felt when first my attention was arrested by the unseen realities of eternity. I do not feel that indifference to the objects of human pursuit, which I felt when confined as the Lord's prisoner in the chamber of affliction. I am not so deeply affected by the unparalleled love of Christ, as I was when I first viewed him bearing away the iniquities of the people by the agonies of his death; nor does sin appear so exceedingly sinful, as when I first tasted its bitterness, and felt its poignant evils. I am neither so grateful for my mercies, nor so abased on account of my transgressions, as I was when the light of a supernatural manifestation first threw open to my view my neglected obligations, and concealed defects. I feel, if possible, more fully convinced of the absolute need of a Saviour, and just such a Saviour as the gospel exhibits, than I was when I first felt the burden of guilt upon my conscience; but yet I am less able to exercise faith in him; and instead

of that peace which was diffused through my heart when I first believed, I am driven to the verge of despair.

"I have not yet communicated to my dear parents the present perturbed state of my feelings, as I am unwilling to give one pang of sorrow to their tender bosom; and I hope that it may please the Lord to turn away from me the face of his anger, and comfort me. There are two verses in a favourite hymn, which, I believe, was composed by the venerable Newton, which I can repeat with intense earnestness.

'Lord, decide the doubtful case!
Thou who art thy people's own,
Shine upon thy work of grace,
If it be indeed begun.

'May I love thee more and more,
If I love at all, I pray;
If I have not lov'd before,
Help me to begin to-day.'

"I am happy to inform you, that there is a dissenting chapel about three quarters of a mile from the Elms, in which the Gospel is preached with great simplicity and fervour, and where my esteemed friends, the Misses Corrie, usually attend; so that a kind Providence has made that provision for our spiritual necessities without the palce of the Establishment, which we should have preferred within, but which is denied us unless we go to a considerable distance. We have been regular for the last few months, and are much delighted with the minister, who favoured us with his company a few weeks since, when we had a select dinner party. He is an amiable, unobtrusive man—imbued, I trust, with the spirit of his Master—cheerful in his disposition, but rather reserved—possesses a good voice—not much action—usually seizes the attention of his congregation, over which he exercises an undisputed authority, when thundering the terrors of the Lord, or when giving utterance to the consolations of mercy—is much esteemed by his people, and those who are admitted into more familiar intimacy, speak of him in the highest terms of affectionate respect. He conducts two services on the Sabbath day—morning and evening; and one thing I must not forget to mention, as I know it will give you plea-

sure,—the incomparable prayers of our Church, form the devotional parts of the service, with the exception of a short extemporary prayer, which he utters before he announces his text. You know we are attached to the Church; but after mature deliberation, and much earnest prayer, we were satisfied that it was our duty to hear the Gospel; and as it is not preached by our vicar, we felt it no less a duty than a privilege to go where the Lord has sent it.

“From some of his discourses I have derived consolation, but he has not touched on any of those points of perplexity in which my mind is involved; and though at times I have thought of soliciting a personal interview, to make known to him all I feel, and all I fear, yet I cannot assume a sufficient degree of confidence. Indeed I cannot speak freely on such delicate subjects to any one but you; and I hope, if you cannot spare time to pay us your long promised visit, that you will favour me with your advice, as I know you will not neglect to pray for me.

“My sister Emma, I regret to say, continues to manifest a decided aversion to the things of the Spirit of God,—they are foolishness to her; but Jane is becoming much more serious. I do not think that she is yet decided, but I hope the good work is begun. I often find her with her Bible, and sometimes she retires to her own room in the evening, where I hope she spends some portion of her time in praying to her Father in secret; and if so, He who seeth in secret will ultimately reward her openly.

“Yours affectionately,

“LOUISA.”

When a young Christian searches the Scriptures for correct information on the great questions of religion, and is favoured with the assistance of judicious and pious friends, he usually passes on from one degree of knowledge to another without meeting with those formidable obstructions, and perplexing embarrassments to which he is exposed, if the path of his enquiry be intersected by any of the erroneous opinions which are abroad in the world. The light which shines on the sacred page, when it comes *directly* from above, is clear and pure, and makes distinctly manifest, to the

judgment and the conscience, the truth as it is in Jesus, in all its simplicity, and amplitude, and harmony. But, when it has to pass through any human medium, it shines in an oblique course,—leaving some essential parts of the scheme of redemption in a state of concealment, while others become too prominently conspicuous; and being seized with avidity, without their connecting links, a defective system is embraced, which generally injures the spirit, and not unfrequently destroys the peace of the mind. Hence too much precaution cannot be exercised, in the early periods of our experience, in the choice of our religious associates, and the books which we peruse; as it is in the power of error, whether it comes from the lips of friendship, or from the press, to do more essential injury, than the truth will ever be able to repair, till after the mind has suffered more than language can easily describe. And as we are all liable to receive pernicious impressions from the numerous errors which are in perpetual circulation around us, we cannot depend with too much simplicity, or docility of disposition, on the Holy Ghost, whom the Saviour has promised to his disciples. *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.—He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.—He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* Hence it is indispensably necessary for the Christian, in every period of his life, but especially when he first enters on his religious course, to implore the gracious influences of the Divine Spirit, to guard him against every species of error—to lead him into all truth—and to invest the truth with that holy unction, which will render it no less a source of the most refined intellectual improvement, than of the most exquisite mental enjoyment. Such a habit of dependence on him will be an effectual guard against the spirit of self-sufficiency, which proves so fatal to those who are enslaved by it; and while it will stimulate to mental diligence in searching the Scriptures, that we may ascertain what is the mind

of the Spirit, it will keep us in a state of independence of human opinion.

But while I wish to point out to the attention of the young Christian the dangers to which he is exposed from the society of his pious, yet injudicious friends, and to bring him into immediate connection with the Spirit of truth, I would at the same time guard him against indulging any visionary expectations respecting the mode of his instruction, or the infallible certainty of the opinions he may permit us to form. *He* teaches the human understanding through the medium of the Scriptures, even while the judgment is altogether unconscious of any supernatural assistance; but his communications are restricted to those points in the system of truth which are essential to salvation.

But even when we are so taught by the Holy Spirit, that we imbibe the truth in its fullest degree, and in its most perfect state, it will not always retain its original power of impression, but will admit of a partial declension in the excitation of the passions, even while its authority over the judgment and the conscience remains undiminished. Hence the lines of Cowper are often employed as expressive of the disconsolate state of the heart:—

“Where is the blessedness I knew,
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view,
Of Jesus and his word?

“What peaceful hours I once enjoy’d!
How sweet their mem’ry still!
But they have left an aching void,
The world can never fill.”

And this cessation of a powerful excitement, which usually accompanies the first impressions of truth, is often regarded, by the *inexperienced* Christian, as an indisputable evidence of the decay of his religious principles, when it may be nothing more than a necessary consequence of the more advanced progress of his personal experience.

[No. 60.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

THE IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

PART I.



“The palace of virtue has, in all ages, been represented as placed on the summit of a hill ; in the ascent of which labour is requisite, and difficulties are to be surmounted, and where a conductor is needed, to direct our way, and to aid our steps.”

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1824.

THE IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

PART I.

"God has been pleased, in sundry portions, and in divers manners, to speak to us in his word; and in all the books of Scripture we may trace an admirable unity of design—an intimate connection of parts—and a complete harmony of doctrines."

Burder.

ON our return from Hackney, where we had spent part of a most interesting day with our mutual friend, Mr. Wilcox, we amused each other by narrating some of the early incidents of our life, when Mr. Llewellyn adverted to the melancholy apostacy of a gentleman* who once made a splendid profession of religion. "I shall never forget, Sir," said Mr. Llewellyn, "my first interview with him, nor the fervent prayer he offered up for my salvation. It was on that ill-fated night when I broke the vow my dear honoured mother received from my lips, and to which I have always attributed my departure from the path of virtue. I entered the parlour in which he was sitting, with my mind highly surcharged with agony. I felt that I had degraded myself by forfeiting the pledge which I had given to allay the fears of a pious parent; and though I endeavoured to assume an air of cheerful pleasantry, yet I could not succeed. It was, when I was suffering under the torturous lashes of self-reproach, that we knelt down together at the throne of grace, and he prayed for me in a very delicate, and in a very impressive manner. His petitions on my behalf were expressed in very appropriate terms, without being so specific as to give offence. As he was borne along by the ardour of his feelings, he gave utterance to some expressions which made an indelible impression on my heart. *'Is he not, O Lord, the son of thy handmaid? and wilt thou refuse to loosen his bonds? Shall the snares of evil be permitted to entangle him? Wilt thou not keep him in the hour of temptation?'* He was, for several years, a very exemplary Christian; and though, on a closer intimacy with him, after it pleased God to call me by his grace, I discovered rather too much self-importance, and self-suffi-

* See No. 2 of this series, page 6.

ciency, yet I did not doubt his sincerity. He went off suddenly, as if he had been struck, like the smitten fig-tree of Galilee, by the blast of the divine displeasure, and since then he has borne no fruit of righteousness. He is now a professed libertine, and often takes the seat of the scorner when surrounded by his associates in vice."

On reaching home, Mr. Llewellyn introduced me to a Mr. Macfarlin, a very intelligent and pious young man, whose manners were very engaging. He was the only son of a stock-broker in the city, who was universally esteemed for his amiability and integrity. This gentleman was the descendant of ancestors who were celebrated in their days for the orthodoxy of their religious sentiments, and the fervour of their devotional spirit; but happening, on his first settlement in London, to form an intimacy with some zealous Unitarians, he imbibed their principles, and regularly attended the ministry of one of their most celebrated preachers. He was too eager after the acquisition of wealth to devote much of his time to speculative inquiries, and too amiable in his temper and disposition to enter the arena of religious disputation with the contending spirits of the age; but he cheerfully and conscientiously supported all the institutions which stood connected with his denomination, which he thought the most intelligent, if not the most pious in the kingdom. He admitted the truth of the Christian religion, but thought its records so ambiguous, or so corrupted in the early ages, that they ought not to be implicitly received. "I will believe nothing," he often used to say, "which I cannot fully comprehend; and I feel myself as much at liberty to dispute the opinion of an apostle, when he speaks on any speculative doctrine, as I do to examine the opinion of any other man." He rejected the divinity of Jesus Christ with as much indignity, as an orthodox believer does the divinity of the pagan deities—often expressed his surprize that any enlightened man should venture to express his belief in the doctrine of the atonement—and regarded the popular belief in the reality of a supernatural influence over the human mind, as one of those corruptions of Christianity, which exposed it to the contempt and ridicule of *infidels*.

But though a decided Unitarian, he never condemned those who differed from him; being fully persuaded that the Supreme Being is altogether regardless of the speculative opinions of his creatures, if they do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with him. *If we are virtuous in this life, we shall be happy in the life to come*,—was an aphorism which he often repeated; and he was so deeply impressed by the truth of it, that he regulated the whole of his conduct by it. Hence, as a husband, as a father, as a master, as a friend, and as a citizen, he discharged the several and diversified duties of these relationships in society, with exemplary exactness; and was justly esteemed for his kindness, his generosity, his integrity, and his universal benevolence. He rarely mingled much in the company of others, except when business required it, being fond of the order and quietude of home; often saying, as an apology for declining the invitations he received, “*I am a domestic man.*”

He was married, when about the age of thirty-five, to a lady of great moral worth, by whom he had four children. The eldest and the youngest died before their mother; the other two survived that melancholy event, which threw a gloom over their earthly felicity which time alone could disperse. These two children were nearly of the same age; they grew up together under the paternal care of their father, whom they most tenderly loved; and though he had too much good sense to grant them every indulgence which their inexperience solicited, yet he made their home the paradise of their bliss. Miss Macfarlin was eighteen when her mother died; and having finished her education she was competent to manage the household affairs; and her brother, who was two years older, was engaged with his father in the duties of his profession. She was a young lady of a lovely temper, rather retired in her habits, fond of reading, and so much devoted to her father and her brother, that she never roved in quest of other society for the pleasure of social intercourse. As she had much leisure time on her hands, she was employed as the almoner of her father's bounty; and such was the degree of pleasure which she took in this work of mercy, that she preferred it to every other source of gratification.

Thus, while she was doing good, her character was imperceptibly acquiring a high moral polish; and though some of the vain triflers of the day often indulged themselves in a few satirical remarks on her puritanical habits, yet she had too much *good sense* to be diverted from the object of her pursuit.

She was rather religiously inclined; but as the system of religion under which she was educated possessed no power to interest the *feelings* of the heart, her religion was confined to a cool assent to a few speculative opinions, and the observance of a few formal external ceremonies. She very rarely read the Bible, as she had been taught to disregard its authority; was strongly prejudiced against the evangelical sentiments of orthodox Christians; and though she was intimate with one female friend who had imbibed them, yet she invariably refused to admit them in the ordinary commerce of conversation. She usually accompanied her father and her brother on the Sabbath to — Street Meeting, where the celebrated Dr. — preaches, to whose ministry they were all very much attached. On one occasion he delivered a discourse from the beautiful words of the Psalmist, Psalm xvi. 11. *Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.* After a very judicious introduction, he said, "Our text will lead us to consider,*

"I. The hope of a Christian in his present state,—
Thou wilt shew me the path of life.

"*The path of life* conducts us up a steep ascent. The palace of virtue has, in all ages, been represented as placed on the summit of a hill; in the ascent of which labour is requisite, and difficulties are to be surmounted, and where a conductor is needed, to direct our way, and to aid our steps. It is to good men a noble and pleasing thought, that they are pursuing a path which God has discovered and pointed out to them. For they know that every path in which he is their conductor must be honourable, must be safe, must bring them in the end to felicity. They follow that *Shepherd of Israel* who always leads his flock into green pastures, and

* The author is indebted to a popular writer for the outlines of this discourse.

makes them lie down beside the still waters. At the same time they know that, if there be truth in religion at all, on this principle they may securely rest, that the Divine Being will never desert those who are endeavouring to follow out, as they can, the path which he has shewn them. He beholds them here in a state of great imbecility—surrounded with much darkness—exposed to numberless dangers, from the temptations that assault them without, and the seduction of misguided and disorderly passions within. In this situation, can they ever suspect that the Father of mercies will leave his servants, alone and unbefriended, to struggle up the hill of virtue, without stretching forth a compassionate arm to aid their frailty, and to guide them through the bewildering paths of life? Where were then the *God of love*? Where those infinite compassions of his nature, in which all his worshippers have been encouraged to trust?—No; he *will send forth his light and his truth, to bring them to his holy hill; for the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and his countenance beholdeth the upright.* With him there is no oblique purpose, to turn him aside from favouring the cause of goodness. No undertaking to which he has given his countenance shall prove abortive. No promise that he has made shall be allowed to fail. Whom he loveth, *he loveth to the end.* *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant.* Let us now proceed,

“II. To consider the termination of these hopes in a future state,—*In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

“All happiness assuredly dwells with God. The *fountain of life* is justly said to be *with him*. That supreme and independent Being must necessarily possess within himself every principle of beatitude; and no cause from without can possibly affect his untroubled felicity. Among created dependent beings happiness flows in scattered and feeble streams—streams that are often tinged with the blackness of misery. But from before the throne of God issues the river of life, full, unmixed, and pure; and the pleasures which now, in scanty portions, we are permitted to taste, are all derived from that source. Whatever gladdens the heart of men or angels, with any real and satisfactory joy.

comes from heaven. It is a portion of the *pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty—a ray issuing from the brightness of the everlasting life*. It is manifest, therefore, that every approach to God must be an approach to felicity. The enjoyment of his immediate presence must be the consummation of felicity; and it is to this presence the Psalmist here expresses his hope that the *path of life* was to conduct him.

“The whole of what is implied in arriving at the presence of the Divinity we cannot expect to comprehend. Such expressions as these of Scripture,—*beholding the face of God—being made glad with the light of his countenance, and satisfied with his likeness—seeing light in his light—seeing no longer darkly, as through a glass, but face to face—seeing him as he is,*—are expressions altogether mysterious, conveying sublime, though obscure ideas of the most perfect happiness and highest exaltation of human nature. This we know, that the absence of God—the distance at which we are now placed from any communication with our Creator, is one great source of our infelicity. Faith exerts its endeavours, but often ineffectually, to raise our souls to him. He is a *God that hideth himself*. His ways seem intricate and perplexed. We frequently cannot reconcile them to the conceptions which we had formed of his nature; and with many a suspicion and doubt they perplex the inquiring mind. His works we survey with astonishment; we wonder and adore. But while we clearly trace the footsteps of their great Author, his presence we can never discern. *We go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but we cannot perceive him; on the left hand, where he worketh, but we cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that we cannot see him*. Hence, amidst the various sorrows and discouragements of the present state, that exclamation of Job’s is often drawn forth from the pious heart, *O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat*.

“Supposing the ideas which I have set before you in this discourse, to be no more than the speculations of a contemplative mind, such as were wont of old to be indulged by the philosophers of the Platonic school, still they would deserve attention, on account of their tend-

ency to purify and elevate the mind. But when they are considered in connection with a revelation which, upon grounds the most unquestionable, we believe to be divine, they are entitled to command, not attention only, but reverence and faith. They present to us such high expectations as are sufficient to determine every reasonable man to the choice of virtue—to support him under all its present discouragements—and to comfort him in the hour of death. Justly may they excite in our hearts that ardent aspiration of the Psalmist,—*My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; oh! when shall I come, and appear before him?* But with this wish in our hearts, never, I beseech you, let us forget what was set forth in the first part of this discourse;—that in order to arrive at the presence of God *the path of life* must previously be shewn to us by him, and that in this path we must persevere to the end. These two things cannot be disjoined—a virtuous life, and a happy eternity.”

As they were conversing together in the evening of this holy day, a reference was made to the discourse which they had heard in the morning, when the son expressed the high degree of pleasure which it had given him.* “I never,” he remarked, “heard a more interesting discourse. What a sublime prospect does Christianity open before us! I wonder how any intelligent person can reject it.” “Yes,” said the old gentleman, “it was a very judicious sermon. I was much delighted with it. We have something to look forward to when it shall please God to remove us by death; for as I have often told you, my children, *If we are virtuous in this life, we shall be happy in the life to come.*” “But, father,” said the son, after a short pause, “if only the virtuous can attain a state of felicity in heaven, as we were informed this morning, what will become of the

* The fact on which this, and two other numbers are founded, was related to the author some time since, by a gentleman personally acquainted with the parties, and who, on application, gave him permission to publish it in the Rambler, on condition that he would conceal them from public observation. This he has attempted to do; but he assures his readers, that the conversations, the inquiries, the reasonings, and the result, are substantially true, while he has thrown them into a form somewhat different from the exact order of their occurrence.

wicked?" "I cannot tell, my child; and I think that the Doctor displayed his accustomed good sense in making no reference to them." "But, father," said the son in reply, "we know that the majority in every age, and in every country, are wicked; and it strikes me, though I confess I have never thought on the subject before, that if the Deity condescend to reveal a system of religion, to promote the present and future happiness of his creatures, he will reveal one that is adapted to the moral condition of the great majority, rather than the moral condition of the select few." "We have nothing to do with others," said the old gentleman; "it is enough for us to know, that if *we* are virtuous in this life, *we* shall be happy in the life to come."

The subject was now dropped till after the old gentleman had retired to rest, when it was resumed. "Your remark," said *Miss Macfarlin* to her brother, "I think is a very just one. It certainly demands attention. If the virtuous only can be saved, the great majority of the human race must perish." "Very true," said the brother; "and we know that many who become virtuous in old age, have been dissipated and licentious in their youthful days. Can such persons expect a state of future felicity as confidently as though they had been always virtuous? And after all, what is virtue? It is simply a line of conduct that runs parallel with the requirements of the society amongst which we live, which vary in different nations, and amongst different people, so much, that what some call a virtuous conduct, we should condemn as an outrage on the feelings of humanity. To give you an example. An Hindoo applauds the virtue of the eldest son, who goes and sets fire to the pile which is to consume his deceased father, and living mother to ashes; but if he were to do such a deed in the vicinity of this city, he would be execrated as a monster of impiety, and justly end his days at Newgate. Can we suppose that the Supreme Being will award a state of future happiness to an Indian, for an action, for which he would punish an European by excluding him from heaven? Impossible!" "And beside," said *Miss M.* "how shall *we* know when we have acquired that *exact degree* of virtue which will entitle us to expect a state of *felicity in the life to come?* The more I think on the

subject, the more I am perplexed and confounded. What shall we do? for I feel the subject too important to be dismissed."

After some further conversation, they mutually resolved to examine the Scriptures, to see if they could gain any information, and very providentially they turned to the fifth chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. They read the following verses with deep interest. *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.—God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.—For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.* "Here we find," said Mr. M. "the apostle speaking of the salvation of the *ungodly*, of *sinners*, and of *enemies*." They proceeded in their examination; and perceived, from many passages which they met with in other Epistles,* that the current language of the Scripture plainly and unequivocally proves, that the revelation of mercy was intended to promote the present and final happiness of the most guilty and depraved, as well as the more virtuous.

As they were familiar with the history of Greece, and had recently read an affecting description of the licentiousness which prevailed in the celebrated city of Ephesus, they turned their attention with peculiar interest to the Epistle which was addressed by the Apostle to the church which he had been the means of planting there; and the paragraph in his second chapter produced a very deep impression on their minds. *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.** After reading these verses Mr. Macfarlin made the following very judicious remarks. "We are to remember, that at the period when Christianity was first promulgated by the apostles, the whole of the Gentile world was sunk into a state of the grossest ignorance, and superstition, and vice; and though some of its most celebrated philosophers and statesmen were

* See 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. † See the whole of this chapter.

men of high national virtue, yet the immense majority of the people were addicted to almost every species of vice. If, then, a state of future felicity is reserved only for the virtuous, and no provision is made for the salvation of the unholy and profane, the labours of the apostles must have been restricted to the select few who had kept themselves from the moral corruptions of the age in which they lived. But such an opinion receives no sanction from this passage, which speaks of the salvation of those *who had their conversation in times past in the lusts of their flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*"

On turning their attention to the brief delineation which the Apostle has given of his character before his conversion to the faith in Christ took place, they were very much struck with his declaration respecting the design of our Lord's mission. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.* "You perceive," said Mr. M. to his sister, "the Apostle says, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; and he has saved the chief, as a pattern for the encouragement of others, who may deem themselves equally guilty, to hope in the mercy of God."

It is with difficulty that the human mind can disengage itself from those early associations which it has formed, and pursue the calm investigation of truth, free from the reacting influence of prejudice. The light of evidence, when it first breaks in upon the understanding, may be sufficiently clear to make manifest its erroneous opinions, even while it is not sufficiently strong to destroy all those impressions which they may have produced. Hence the conversion of a person from the errors of Unitarianism to the pure faith in Christ, is a more difficult undertaking than the conversion of an avowed infidel; as the one has to retrace the steps of his inquiry, and renounce that belief which he once regarded as bearing the seal of divine authority, while the

other requires only the submission of the truth to his examination, with its appropriate evidence.

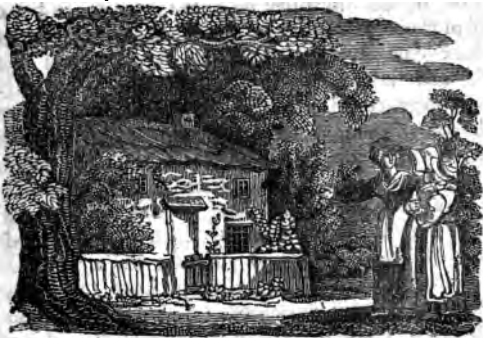
"It is true," said *Mr. M.* "that the epistles unequivocally prove, that Jesus Christ came into the world, not merely to set us an example of virtue, but to save sinners from a state of future misery, and to fit them for heaven; but what degree of dependence ought we to place on their testimony? May they not have become corrupted by the false glosses of the early ages? or may not the writers of them have committed some mistakes?" "So we have been taught to believe," said *Miss M.* "but it is possible that we may be mistaken. However, as we cannot now, by a process of inquiry, decide on the genuineness of every passage which we have been examining, let us turn our attention to the gospels, and see if the evangelists give their suffrage in favour of the current statement of the epistles. If the whole of the Scriptures are written by the inspiration of the Almighty, we may very fairly expect to find a continuity and harmony of thought running through the various parts of them, and especially on that paramount question which now engrosses our attention. Do the evangelists say any thing about a state of future happiness being confined to the *virtuous*? or do they hold out the hope of mercy, and future bliss to the wicked?" The reply which Jesus Christ made to the Pharisees and Scribes, who were reproaching him for his attention to sinners, struck them with great force. *Like-wise I say unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.* "What can be more conclusive?" said *Mr. M.*; "our Lord not only alludes to the salvation of sinners, but asserts that the repentance of *one* excites more joy in heaven than the permanent goodness of ninety-nine just persons which need no repentance." The following parable they read with deep interest, as it threw additional light of evidence on the subject of their inquiry. Luke xviii. 9—14. "Does not this prove that sinners can be saved? Indeed, if we attend to the language which Jesus Christ used on another occasion, we shall be convinced that the obvious design of his mission was to reclaim and save those who were the objects of virtue's scorn and contempt." Matt. ix. 10—13.

[No. 61.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

MISS HOLMES.

PART V.



Miss Holmes. "How long have you lived in this lonely hut?"
"About twenty years. I was turned out of the cottage I
lived in before, by Lord H——'s steward, because I would
not give up my religion; but the Lord opened the heart of a
good man who lives in the village, and he built this little cot-
tage for me, where I have lived rent free ever since."

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1824.

MISS HOLMES.

PART V.

"Some will spend their time in enquiries about the number of the saved, when they ought to be striving for themselves, that they might obtain an entrance into the strait gate: and some will waste those precious moments in speculating about the secrets of the book of life, which they should fill up by supporting themselves, and making progress through the narrowness of the way that leads to it." *Chalmers.*

IN a large family it often happens that some of the children discover a peculiar aversion to the religious habits which prevail amongst them; and though the cause of this hostility may be traced up to the depravity of their nature, yet we ought not to overlook those secondary causes which may have contributed to its growth and manifestation. For though there is an innate propensity to evil in the human heart, and though that propensity is much stronger in some than in others, yet it rarely breaks through those barriers which a judicious course of instruction has thrown up, unless it is brought into contact with strong and overpowering temptations, which *might* have been guarded against. Hence, most pious parents, when mourning over the irreligion of their children, have to reproach themselves, for some omissions, or compliances, which have directly, or indirectly, tended to produce the evil which they deplore—and ultimately led to that fatal degree of indifference, or open hostility to the paramount claims of religion, which no subsequent remonstrances have been able to correct or controul.

This was the case in the family of the Holmes's. Miss Emma was a beautiful girl. Her manners were exceedingly graceful. She was witty and satirical in her disposition; and from the earliest dawn of reason, gave unequivocal proofs that she required more than ordinary attention in the cultivation of her mind. From the superior vivacity of her spirits, the playfulness of her fancy, and her intellectual acuteness, she gained a powerful ascendancy over the affections of her parents, who trusting too much to the maturity of her judgment for the correction of "budding ills," paid

less regard to the formation of her habits, than to the best of their children. The partiality for dress, which she discovered when a child, and which grew with her growth, was fostered by her mother instead of repressed; till at length she lavished nearly the whole of her attention on her exterior appearance. After having spent a few years in the excellent establishment, where her senior sisters had finished their education, she was sent with her sister Jane to a fashionable boarding school, in which all the accomplishments were taught, which fit the pupil to move with gracefulness on the stage of fashion. It was here that she formed an intimacy with the daughter of a Colonel Orme, who resided near the Elms, and which proved a source of perpetual sorrow to all the pious members of her family. After she left school, she was permitted by her unsuspecting parents to exchange visits with her young friend, who was, by the influence of her sentiments and example, gradually destroying that reverence for the authority of religion, and that attachment to its habits, which they were so anxious to cherish and to strengthen. Miss Holmes saw with deep regret the fatal bias, which her sister's mind was receiving; and though she availed herself of every opportunity which circumstances offered, to check, and to turn it, yet she constantly met with a most determined resistance. "Indeed," said Miss Emma, after her sister had been urging her to return some novels which her friend had sent for her perusal. "I shall not do it till I have read them. They are amusing and interesting; and if they contain any objectionable sentiments, I can easily reject them." "Yes," said Miss Holmes, "they may amuse, and may interest, but they will not improve the mind. They will give you false views of men and of manners—imperfectly reconcile you to sentiments and opinions at which you would now shudder—induce such a love for the marvellous and romantic, that you will be dissatisfied with the dull uniformity of life—and destroy all those religious impressions which our dear parents have been so anxious to produce." "When I feel the injury," she replied, "to which you allude, I will reject them; but till then you must permit me to follow my

own inclination without controul. I am old enough to judge for myself."

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of their mamma, who gave Miss Holmes a letter which came enclosed in a parcel from her friend, Mrs. Loader, and which she had been anxiously expecting.

"MY DEAR LOUISA,

"I received yours of the 15th, and was pleased to find, that you were so far restored, as to be able to occupy an official station in the service of Christian benevolence. The duties which now devolve upon you, are no less novel than they are important; and while you may unintentionally provoke others to scorn, by the activity of your zeal, you will often involve yourself in perplexity and mortification. You already begin to feel the loss of those spiritual enjoyments, which you so largely participated, when "first you knew the Lord," and suppose that this is a conclusive evidence of the declining influence of religious principle over your mind; but you ought not to draw such a conclusion. If, my dear, you expect that the unseen realities of the eternal world will always retain that powerful ascendancy over the passions which they acquired, when you first felt their influence, you proceed in your calculations on a mistaken data. You have, I know, a fine taste to relish the beauties of nature, and can throw on canvas, the landscape which delights the eye; but have you never felt surprised at the comparatively trifling effect which has been produced when surveying from a nice point of vision that fascinating scenery, which, when first discovered, overpowered you by its charms. There has been the same sunny bank—the same distant grove—the same murmuring stream—the same herd of cattle feeding in the same lonely glen—the same sheep-fold in the neighbouring field—the same village church shooting up its attractive spire, amidst the thick studded coppice—the same variegated foliage hanging upon the extended branches of the trees of the hedges and the woods—the same warbling notes of the feathered tribe—the same order of peasantry returning from their daily toil.

to meet the welcome of their healthy children—and the same sun throwing his softened glory over the whole expanse, in his journey to the western sky; and yet how disproportionate the subsequent impressions of this rich combination of objects, when compared to those which elevated, and entranced the soul when they first burst open on the senses. To account for this, it will not be necessary for you to impeach the correctness of your taste; but merely to refer to the wise, yet mysterious constitution of the mind, which requires the charm of novelty to give excitement to its most powerful sensibility. If then the human mind requires the charm of novelty to invest those objects which strike the senses with an overpowering force of impression; ought we to be surprised if it require the same charm, in those which are unseen? Certainly not. Why then should you suppose that the influence of your religious principles is declining, merely because you are not so strongly, or so delightfully affected by what you believe, as you were when faith first penetrated the veil, and gazed on ‘the wondrous scene.’

“When you were first impressed by the truth, you were a prisoner—confined to the solitary chamber—you held but little intercourse with the world around you—and your feelings were rendered more capable of strong excitement from the influence which a protracted affliction had imperceptibly acquired over them; but now you are out and abroad—your spirits are braced up by the pressure of calls and engagements, which demand your attention, and give a varied and interesting movement to your reflections and decisions; and you are compelled no less from the genius of your Christian faith, than the claims of society, to come into contact, and alliance, and close intimacy with the duties and pursuits of social life. Can such a change in your habits take place, without having some powerful effect on the state of your feelings? Impossible! An active life is less favourable to devotional feeling, than a contemplative one; and though I would not throw out a remark which should operate as a discouragement to exertion in the cause of *Him*, who became obedient unto death, for us; yet, I assure you, that in proportion as the number of your public engagements increase, you will be

deprived of the pleasures of retired devotion, even though the truths of religion retain their ascendancy over your judgment, and its holy principles reign in your heart.

"I have thought it right to make these observations, to guard you against the common error into which young Christians often fall; in supposing that their faith is not genuine, because it does not uniformly act with the same degree of force on the passions.

"I am happy that you are intimate with the Corrie's. They are a very excellent family, decidedly pious, and very benevolent. They are Christians of the old school—still retain their attachment to the singular phraseology, which was very much in vogue amongst our evangelical preachers about thirty years since—and have imbibed a few opinions which want a revision.

"You appear to have had your peace disturbed, and your soothing prospects darkened, by your intercourse with them; but be not alarmed, as the more your faith is tried, the purer it will shine; and instead of sustaining any injury from the conflicting elements of doubt and suspicion, which threaten to tear it up by the roots, like the majestic tree of the forest, it will strike them still deeper and deeper in that holy soil, in which it is ordained to grow.

"Your friends are not singular in their views of the nature of faith, but I do not think that they are correct; and as you have requested me to give you my opinion, I will cheerfully do it. They confound a plenary conviction of the truth of the Christian scheme of salvation, with an assurance of a personal interest in its invaluable blessings. This is the error into which they have fallen, and on the eve of which you are now standing; but it does not require much force of reasoning to shew its fallacy. Faith is an assent of the mind to some truth, or some system of truth, which is established by satisfactory evidence. As this assent becomes weaker or stronger, in proportion to the clearness, and force of the evidence, by which it is produced, a full assurance of faith, is that high degree of it which admits of no suspicion. Hence you are convinced that Jesus Christ *came into this world*—that he sojourned in the land of *Judea*—that he performed the miracles which are ascribed

ed to him—that he died on the cross, to expiate the guilt of sin—rose from the dead—and is now seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high, receiving there the ascriptions of praise from the lips of the redeemed.

“You want no miracle wrought in your presence, to induce you to believe this, because you believe it on the authority of the inspired writers; nor is it necessary that a voice should speak to you from the celestial glory to confirm it. But though you are fully convinced of these facts, yet you are not so fully convinced that he died *for you*—or that he is gone to heaven to prepare a mansion for you, in the house of his Father. You believe that there is *redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace*; but you sometimes doubt whether *you* are redeemed and forgiven. You believe that *he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*; but you are not fully persuaded that he is interceding for you. You feel your need of such a Saviour; and you know, that *all that the Father giveth him shall come to him*; yet, you doubt, whether the Father ever gave you to Christ; or, whether you have ever come unto him, in a scriptural manner.* You cannot believe the truth of the Gospel more firmly than you do believe it—you cannot place a more entire dependance on Christ for salvation, than you do place; you cannot feel more disposed to give him all the honour of your salvation, than you do feel; and yet, at times, you doubt your acceptance, your safety—your final blessedness. Does not this clearly prove, that faith in Christ, and an assurance of an interest in him, are essentially distinct.

“Nor can we doubt the correctness of this assertion, if we attend to the *order* of the SPIRIT’S operations on our mind. He *inclines* us to believe the truth which he exhibits; and he *enables* us to do it. *For he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you; all things that the Father hath*

* On this important subject, the Author wishes to refer the intelligent reader to No. 22 of this Series.

are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. This is his first act; but it is a later act, to bear testimony with our spirits that we are born of God; and as some space of time must necessarily elapse after he has performed the first act, before he performs the second, it is evident, that faith may exist in its purity, and in its force, even where there is no assurance of it. Hence it follows, that a person who relies on the atonement of Christ for salvation, is as safe, though he live and die without any firm persuasion of his future blessedness, as one who is enabled to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Indeed, my dear Louisa, I should dread making the final happiness of my soul depend in the slightest degree on my personal assurance of its safety. This would be nothing less than intermingling a personal attainment with the efficacy of the Saviour's death; and placing my hope of a blissful immortality on the precarious basis of a fluctuating feeling, rather than on that immoveable foundation which God has laid in Zion. If you peruse the biographical sketches, which constitute one of the most interesting and profitable readings of modern times, you will perceive that the most eminent servants of our Lord, have, during their pilgrimage on earth, complained of that alternation of feeling which you have recently experienced—and some have been left for days, and for months, to walk in mental darkness without the light of the divine countenance. Your favourite poet was a man eminently imbued with the spirit of Christianity, which he has diffused through his inimitable writings, and yet in what a dark and gloomy frame of mind did he leave this world. His biographer says, that within a few days of his decease, after a near relative had been attempting to cheer him with the prospect of exchanging a world of infirmity and sorrow, for a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, he threw from him the words of peace, and exclaimed, "Oh, spare me! spare me! You know, you know it to be false." Having given utterance to this despairing language he sunk into a state of apparent insensibility, in which state he continued for twelve hours, and then expired without moving a limb, or even heaving a breath. Thus terminated the mortal career of one of the most celebrated

poets that ever consecrated the powers of his mind to the cause of Christ.

“Without one cheerful beam of hope,
Or spark of glimmering day.”

“Shall we say that he died without faith? because he died without an assurance that he possessed it. Would not such an opinion necessarily tend to destroy our confidence in the sufficiency of the atonement of Christ? by making our final happiness, depend on the peculiar frame of our mind, in that solemn hour, when some latent cause may bring over the spirit, a gloom which no human effort can dispel? If we believe in Christ we shall be saved; and though we may sometimes doubt the genuine nature of our faith, yet that circumstance will not endanger either our present safety, or our future blessedness.”

“But though, my dear Louisa, an assurance of your interest in Christ is not essential to your salvation, yet you will find it to be essential to your happiness? You cannot doubt it, without feeling a deep pang—and if you should *habitually* doubt it, you will live in a state of perpetual dejection. I urge you in the spring time of your experience, to attain it; or you may so accustom yourself to a desponding spirit, as to feel more inclined to cherish, than expel it. *Wherefore*, says the Apostle, *give all diligence to make your calling and election sure*. But to quote the expressions of a living author, beware how you proceed in this inquiry. Do not place your confidence in speculative opinions; be not influenced by particular feelings, which having much of animal nature in them, may sometimes elevate and sometimes depress you, while your *state* is the same; do not wait for sudden impressions and visionary suggestions, but remember that the witness and the seal of the spirit are *his work, and his influences; hereby we know that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit*.

“And if you should not immediately attain a full assurance of your interest in Christ, do not suffer your mind to be overwhelmed in trouble; as this is a knowledge which belongs to the more advanced Christian rather than the young disciple. It will not come at once by an overpowering force—driving away every gloomy

fear—and throwing open before you an unclouded prospect of a blissful immortality—but gradually—at intermitting seasons—weakening the strength of your doubts, and strengthening the weakness of your faith—till at length the God of hope will fill you *with all joy and peace in believing*. I was much struck with a paragraph in a devotional treatise which I recently perused, and which I will send you. ‘Great consolation is often received at different seasons, even during the period when our general feelings are intermingled with dark and painful forebodings.’ Hence the *weakest believer* sometimes returns from the closet and from the sanctuary, strong in faith, though he may again relapse into his more stated frame of despondency. The clouds occasionally separate, which enables him to view the sun of righteousness, and feel the healing virtue of his presence, though they may again unite to obscure his vision and leave him to grope on his “darkling way.” These intermitting seasons of darkness and light, of high enjoyment and deep dejection, have a salutary effect, and serve to prepare him for that state of settled assurance, which in fact, they tend in some measure to produce.’

“As I have so far exceeded the ordinary bounds of epistolary correspondence, I shall not at present enter on the other very important questions to which you refer in your last; but will cheerfully do it at some future period. It has given us great pleasure to hear that you have such an excellent minister near you, and though he preaches in a chapel which does not belong to our establishment, yet if he preach Christ and him crucified, I have no doubt you will enjoy his labours. The feet of the messenger that publisheth peace, are no less beautiful on the mountains than in the city, and his proclamation is as interesting to the self-condemned sinner, when delivered in the unconsecrated chapel, as when uttered under the arched vault of a spacious cathedral; and though we may retain our predilections and partialities to forms and places, yet we ought not to suffer our prejudices to deprive us of our spiritual consolations.

“The account which you have given me of your sisters, has awakened an opposite class of feeling in my breast. Emma, I fear, is under some fatal influence which you have not yet detected, and will, unless subdued by the

loving kindness of God our Saviour, devote herself to the pleasures of the world. Her beauty has made her vain, and the versatility of her genius is a snare to her. You must watch over her with great care, and pray, that He who called *you* out of darkness into his marvellous light, would be pleased to renew her in the spirit of her mind. Jane is a lovely girl. She has an elegant mind, and if the good work is begun in her heart, she will be an interesting companion to you. You will let me hear from you as soon as you can spare a few moments from your numerous engagements, and believe me to remain,

"Your's affectionately,

"_____."

After tea, as the evening was very serene, Miss Holmes proposed a walk to her sister Jane, who very willingly consented to accompany her. On passing through the grove, they met a poor old woman, who lived in a neat cottage by the way side. They had often seen her knitting in the porch, but had never spoken to her, nor did they know her character. "I am going," said the old woman, "to your house, ladies, to ask a favour." "Any favour," said *Miss Holmes*, "which we have in our power to grant we shall be very happy to grant you. What is it?" "I want Miss, to procure a larger Bible, as my eyes are become so dim, I cannot see to read this small print," (exhibiting a Bible which bore the marks of age.) "I will step back and fetch you one," said Jane, "and save you the trouble of walking further." The Bible was very soon fetched, and the two young ladies walked to the cottage with the old woman where they spent a most interesting hour.

Miss Holmes. "How long have you lived in this lonely hut?"

"About twenty years. I was turned out of the cottage I lived in before, by Lord H——'s steward, because I would not give up my religion; but the Lord opened the heart of a good man who lives in the village, and he built this little cottage for me, where I have lived rent free ever since."

Miss Holmes. "How long is it since you first knew the Lord?"

"More than fifty years. I was, when young, a very thoughtless girl, and took great delight in pleasure; but

the Lord was pleased, blessed be his name, to call me to know him, and love him, and serve him, when I was about the age of this young lady," pointing to Miss Jane.

Miss Holmes. "And are you not weary of his service?"

"Weary of his service," said the venerable saint, as her eyes sparkled with the fire of a youthful ardour, "no Miss, though I often wonder that the Lord is not weary of me, as I am such an unprofitable servant."

Miss Holmes. "Then after fifty years experience you can bear testimony to the truth of what Solomon says of religion; *her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace?*"

"Yes I can. I have been a widow thirty years. I have outlived all my children but one, and I have not seen him for more than sixteen years. I have had many troubles, but the Lord has been my support. He has given me a spirit of resignation and contentment, and I can say, let him do with me as seemeth good in his sight."

Miss Holmes. "Then you don't envy the rich and the noble?"

"No Miss, I envy no one. If the rich have comforts which I have not, they have cares and temptations, from which I am protected. May the Lord incline you, ladies, while you are young, to seek him, and then you will find a treasure which is of more value than thousands of gold and silver."

Miss Holmes. "I hope he has inclined us to seek him; and as you have known him so many years, we shall be happy to come and visit you, that we may be taught the way of the Lord more perfectly."

"I shall be glad to see you at any time, if you will condescend to come and see me; but it is not in my power to teach *you*. The prophet says, *All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.*"

"We will come to-morrow," said Miss Jane, "and have a long chat. Good night."

"Good night, ladies. May the Lord bless you!"

[No. 62.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

ON CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

PART III.



“Expel Christianity from the earth! Why, what evil has she done? You may trace her progress by the improved condition of the people whom she has visited and blest. She finds a wilderness, where the savage beasts of nature prowl, and leaves a fruitful field for the sickle of the husbandman.”

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ON CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

PART III.

"A fable!—but if a fable, it is one got up by a few illiterate men, with so much art—its various parts are adjusted with so much skill—its ideal substance is invested with such resistless energy, that the most learned have not been able to detect the fraud—the most eloquent have been silenced by its authority—and the most hostile have been subdued by its overpowering charms."

As Mr. Llewellyn was preparing to leave ——— for business, he received the following note from an intimate friend who resides at ———.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I am sorry to inform you that my dear Charles still continues very ill; we fear he is getting worse every day. You know how fond we are of him. He is our first-born—the beginning of our strength—the brightest jewel in the crown of our domestic happiness. But amidst the gloom which is hovering around us, we have some beams of consolation dawning upon us. He received the report of the physician with an unchanged countenance, and since then he has often spoken of his approaching dissolution with a high degree of pleasure. He wishes very much to see you; and it is at his particular request that I now urge you to come as soon as you can make it convenient. His afflicted mother unites in affectionate remembrance, with

"Yours truly,

"JOHN WESTON."

"I will return," said *Mr. Llewellyn*, "to an early dinner, and go and see him in the afternoon; perhaps you will have no objection to accompany me." I consented. We went together; and on our arrival we were informed that he was rather better, but still very ill. On entering his room a most affecting scene burst open upon us. The mother sat on the side of the bed, supporting her son, who was just seized with a violent

fit of coughing; the father stood motionless at the foot; and near the window there were two younger children bathed in tears. After recovering himself from the excessive fatigue occasioned by this fit, he stretched forth his hand, and said, "I am happy to see you, Sir. I am dying; and soon, very soon, I shall leave this world, for a better." "Then," said *Mr. Llewellyn*, "you are neither afraid, nor unwilling to die." "No, Sir," he replied, with great animation of expression, "I am not afraid to die, because Jesus died for me;—I am not unwilling to die, because to depart, and be with Christ, is far better, than to live in a world of sin." "But," said *Mr. Llewellyn*, "what induces you to believe that Jesus Christ died for you?" "I read, Sir, in my Bible, that Jesus Christ died for sinners, and that *he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* I am a sinner—a great sinner—an unworthy sinner; and I pray to God for the pardon of my sins through faith in the death of the Saviour; and he has forgiven me. I feel it. I enjoy great peace of mind. The fear of death is taken from me. *I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*" "Have you always been as deeply impressed by a conviction of your guilt, and of your need of a Saviour, as you are now?" "No, Sir; I once lived, like other children, without reflecting on these important subjects. But about eight months since, when my dear mother was praying with me one Sabbath afternoon, I *felt* what I never *felt* before. I could not tell at first from whence the deep impression came, or what was the design of it. I became more and more unhappy; I knew not what to do. At length I began to pray to my heavenly Father; and while upon my knees the encouraging language of the Saviour was brought to my recollection, and gave me inexpressible comfort. *Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.* Oh, Sir! what a mercy that little children have a Saviour, who will gather them in his arms, and bless them!" "I suppose, my dear," said *Mr. Llewellyn*, "you love that Saviour in whom you trust for salvation?" This question brought over

his countenance a fine benignant smile; his eyes suddenly shone with a radiant brightness; and raising his hands, as though in the act of embracing the object of his supreme affection, he said, with a very impressive accent, "Yes, I do love him." "Then," I remarked, "you are willing to leave your father, and mother, and brother, and sister, to enjoy his presence in heaven." "Yes, Sir," he replied, with great composure, "I am willing to depart, and be with Christ; and I hope they are willing to give me up." On seeing them weep, he said, "Don't weep for me; I am happy, and expect very soon to be more happy.* I am going where there will be no more sickness—no more pain—no more sorrow, because no more sin.

‘There shall I see his face,
And never, never sin;
There, from the rivers of his grace,
Drink endless pleasures in.’”

We left this deeply interesting scene, no less astonished than delighted, and on our return home we found Mr. Gordon waiting our arrival. "I have been amusing myself," he said, "with 'No Fiction,'—a most bewitching book, which, in my opinion, is highly creditable to the character of the author." "Yes, Sir," said Mr. Llewellyn; "and there is one paragraph which I will beg your permission to quote, as it bears so expressly on the scene we have just witnessed." "What

* He continued in this frame of mind for several days after our interview with him, when he became so much worse that his decease was hourly expected. As his mother sat watching by his side during a short slumber, he suddenly awoke, and asked to be lifted up. Having taken a little toast and water to moisten his mouth, as the cup was removed from his lips, he said, "What must the wicked suffer, who, when in hell, have no water to cool their parched tongue! I deserve to be banished there; but,

‘O what hath Jesus done for me!
Before my ravish'd eyes,
Rivers of life divine I see,
And trees of Paradise.’”

Having repeated this verse he paused for a few moments; and then turning his eyes towards his dear mother, he said, "Give me, my dear, dear mother, the parting kiss, for I am just going to glory;"—and having received it, his head fell on her bosom, and he peacefully expired, without a groan, or a sigh.

scene, Sir?" "A little boy of twelve years of age, gradually wasting away under the power of an insidious disease, yet rising above the fear of death, and expressing the fullest confidence of a state of future glory.

"I have often been delighted," said *Douglas*, "in reading the accounts of the power of religion on the minds of children; but this is the *first* instance which has fallen beneath my own eye. What a religion is ours! How great—and yet how plain! It is so sublime, that it rises beyond the conception of the most enlarged mind! and so simple, that it brings home its lessons to the bosom of a little child! The elements of the Gospel, like the elements of our nourishment, are adapted to the endless varieties of age, and character, and circumstance, throughout all the human race."

"And this appears," said *Lefevre*, "to be a feature in our religion which distinguishes it from all false religions. As far as I am acquainted with the subject, no one of the Pagan systems *could* have been rendered universal. They all received their character from national prejudice, national policy, and predominant national vices."

"Yes," rejoined *Douglas*; "and as, in their own nature, they were not adapted for the benefit of mankind as such, so their great teachers discovered an indifference to the bulk of the human race, incompatible with every thing which deserves the name either of religion or morality. With haughty pride they exulted in their own supposed wisdom, and looked down with scorn or ridicule on the folly of those who were not initiated into their false philosophy. Man scarcely deserved their notice, but as he claimed the proud titles of rich, or wise, or noble; and women and children were utterly abandoned to ignorance and wretchedness. Jesus, our blessed Saviour, was the first Master in religion who opened the door of knowledge to *all*—who carried his instructions and his tears to the cottage of the *poor*! This appears to me to involve a powerful evidence of the truth of Christianity, that may well perplex and confound the hosts of infidelity. I have more than once thought that the Psalmist must have referred to this use of the subject, when he said, *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength, because of*

thine ENEMIES; that thou mightest STILL THE ENEMY AND THE AVENGER."

Mr. Gordon. "This is certainly an interesting tale—very similar to the story of 'The Woodman's Daughter'; but I must confess, with all due deference to you, that I see nothing very remarkable in it: and how you can think of adducing it as an argument in favour of the divine origin of Christianity, rather surprises me. Children, we know, are imitative. They take the manners, and the habits, and the tones of their parents, and teachers; and if they should adopt their sentiments, and feelings, and expressions, it certainly ought not to be considered as remarkable. But yet I should like to see how you attempt to connect such a fact and the divinity of the Gospel together."

Mr. Llewellyn. "Such a fact, Sir, proves that the Christian religion is adapted (as we may fairly presume it would be, if of divine origin,) to the moral condition of man, irrespective of his age—of the strength or weakness of his intellect—or the peculiar shades of his moral character. To suppose that this adaptation is by accident, would be no less objectionable, than to conclude, with the sceptics of the French school, that it is by chance that we see, that we hear, and that we speak. If you are prepared to admit, that the marks of contrivance, which we can easily discover in the construction and organization of our senses, supply us with a legitimate argument in favour of the existence of a God, by whose power and wisdom we have been formed, I cannot perceive how you can avoid admitting the marks of contrivance, which we may *as easily* trace in the Christian scheme of salvation, as conclusive evidence in favour of its divine origin."

Mr. Gordon. "O Sir! it has been invented by a few crafty men, who wished to display their skill at the expence of our credulity."

Mr. Llewellyn. "I know that this is a favourite opinion with you Deists; but I do not think that you can support it. How came these men to devise a scheme of religion which is so admirably adapted to the moral state of man? From whence did they gain their information? They tell us, that they wrote under the dictation of an infinitely wise Spirit: and if we examine

their productions impartially, we shall feel conscious that they speak the truth; because it was not within the compass of their own talents to frame a scheme of religion, so pure, so sublime, and yet so simple, and so suited to our moral necessities. For our guilt it provides a propitiatory sacrifice, whose blood cleanses from all sin—for our depravity it provides a purifying influence, by which we are made partakers of the purity of the divine nature—regarding us as oppressed with the cares and sorrows of the world, it animates us with exceeding great and precious promises, by which we are enabled to rise above them—and viewing us as panting for immortality, it draws aside the veil of futurity, and delights us with the lovely vision of endless felicity.”

Mr. Gordon. “All this is very delightful, but visionary: and I certainly think that we should be more happy without such a scheme of religion than we are with it.”

Mr. Llewellyn. “Then would you expel Christianity from the earth, as an enemy to man—as a destroyer of his felicity; and plunge the whole human family into that state of profound ignorance, and positive wretchedness, in which they existed before the light of life and of bliss dawned upon them.”

Mr. Gordon. “I certainly should vote for the expulsion of Christianity, if my suffrage would bring about such an event; but I fear that it is too deeply fixed in the prejudices of the public mind ever to be rooted up, at least in our time.”

Mr. Llewellyn. “But, Sir, would you not tremble in anticipation of the success of such an effort? Expel Christianity from the earth! Why, what evil has she done? You may trace her progress by the improved condition of the people whom she has visited and blest. She finds a wilderness, where the savage beasts of nature prowl, and leaves a fruitful field for the sickle of the husbandman; she meets with briars and thorns, and converts them into the myrtle-tree and the rose; she encounters all the base lusts, and ferocious dispositions of our nature, and supplants them with the tranquillizing affections of peace. She improves the intellect—refines the taste—and humanizes the passions; and by raising men to a state of spiritual communion with the Supreme Being, imprints on

them the image of his benevolence—and animates them with his love of righteousness. She mitigates the violence of sorrow—binds up the wounds which adversity inflicts in the heart of man—reconciles the mourner to the cause of his bitterest grief—opens concealed fountains of consolation to the weary traveller, in his passage through this vale of mortality—disarms death of his terrors—and exhibits, from the other side of the grave, a perspective of tranquillity, and of joy, which no hand can sketch, or tongue describe. Expel Christianity from the earth! Then, Sir, you would give perpetuity to those horrid systems of idolatry, which maintain their tremendous usurpation over the great majority of the human race; as no power will ever destroy them but that which the Gospel of Christ displays. Nay, Sir; if you were to succeed, you would prove the greatest enemy to man that ever visited the earth since the author of all evil triumphed over our first parents: for how many thousands would you, by such a wanton act of cruelty, deprive of their sweetest sources of consolation, and brightest prospects of bliss!”

Mr. Gordon. “You are eloquently severe; but, my dear Sir, you may spare your severity, as it is not likely that I shall ever make the attempt; and less likely to succeed, if I should be vain, or, to quote your own language, wanton, or cruel enough to do it. I admit, most willingly, that Christianity has done some good; but you must admit that it has done some evil; and it is but fair to balance the one against the other, to see which preponderates. If she has promoted peace in one country, she has planned massacres in others: if she has blest one city, she has introduced discord and division in others: and if there are a few solitary individuals animated by the promises of mercy which fall from her lips, there is a larger number who tremble under her awful denunciations of vengeance.”

Mr. Llewellyn. “Her promises of mercy are addressed to all, and all are invited to receive the blessings which she is waiting to bestow; but if they disdainfully reject them, and treat her message of grace with contumacious contempt, she turns away, and announces their approaching doom: and she does this in a tone, and with a lofty majesty of speech, which makes the most

daring stand in awe of her. But, Sir, why do they tremble, if they believe she has no power to punish? Your other charges against her I will meet by a quotation from a book,* which I wish you would peruse, and which I shall be happy to lend you.

“That men calling themselves Christians have persecuted others with unrelenting cruelty, and have shed rivers of innocent blood, is but too true. Did Christianity countenance this conduct, it would merit unqualified reprobation. But far from such a disposition, it forbids all violence and injury to be employed in its defence. Christianity never shed a drop of its enemies’ blood, since the day that Christ died on the cross; but it has been lavish of its own. It never forged a chain to bind a heretic or an adversary, nor erected a prison to immure him. Christianity never dipped her pen in tears of blood, to write a penal law denouncing vengeance on infidels. She never made her bitterest foe heave a groan, from any bodily suffering inflicted by her hands. Her only weapons of offence and defence are truth and prayer. She returns good for evil, and blessing for cursing.

“If men wearing the garb of the disciples of Jesus, instigated by pride, and the lust of dominion, and a desire to gratify the worst passions of the human heart, injure any of the human race under a pretence of zeal for religion, they act in direct opposition to the Gospel, and you cannot condemn them with too much severity. But surely Christianity should not be condemned for what it forbids men to perpetrate under pain of the divine displeasure. Or if such as were truly Christians ever sought to put a stop to infidelity or error, and to propagate the Gospel in the world, by force, (and it is to be deplored with tears of blood, that such there have unhappily been,) they will receive no more thanks from Christ, than the three disciples when they wished him to bring down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans;—“Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of: the Son of man came not to destroy mens’ lives, but to save them.” Nor would he account the words, which he directed to Peter on a different occasion, too severe

* See Dr. Bogue’s Essay on the Divine Authority of the New Testament.

to be used to them here;—"Get thee behind me Satan; thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things which be of God, but the things which be of men." Both the principles and precepts of the Gospel, and the conduct of Christ and his apostles, are as remote from persecution as the east is from the west."

Mr. Gordon. "I admire the candid and amiable spirit of the writer, and will certainly give his work a reading, if only for respect to the friendship which dictates the present; but I will not flatter you with any hope of bringing me over to your belief. But waving all personal remarks, allow me to ask you, if you really believe that Christianity will ever become a universal religion? and if so, how do you think it will be propagated through the earth?"

Mr. Llewellyn. "That it is *adapted* to become a universal religion, no one can doubt who has ever enquired into its nature and design, or who has ever read the history of its progress. It is suited to man as a rebellious subject of the divine government; and it has been embraced by some of every rank, and of every denomination of character. Hence, if you could bring together, in one place, the native of Europe, of Africa, of Asia, or of America, or from any of the islands or cities which belong to either of these great divisions of the earth; and if, by some miraculous influence, you could impart to them the power of speaking the same language; you would find them all, if they had embraced the pure faith of Christ, giving utterance to the same sentiments—expressing the same feelings—exulting in the same prospects—and disclosing all the peculiarities of the same singular and extraordinary character."

Mr. Gordon. "But, Sir, if this hypothetical statement be correct, how will you account for the endless divisions which prevail amongst those who are known to have embraced the Christian faith?"

Mr. Llewellyn. "You ought, Sir, to distinguish between a real and a nominal Christian; and though I will not deny but there are diversities of opinion even amongst real Christians, yet they relate to minor and subordinate questions.

"Consider Christianity as coming from God,—it is pure, and unspeakably good: view it as received by

men,—it will be, as the schoolmen say, *secundum modum recipientis*. If the difference of capacity, and the prejudices and passions of mankind be duly weighed, we shall not account it strange if they do not all think alike, nor receive the truth in all its purity. But this is not peculiar to the Christian religion. There are divisions and dissensions as to religious sentiments among Pagan idolaters, among Mahometans, and among Deists. You cannot deny it. But the Deist does not consider this as a reason for rejecting Deism. If so, neither is it a reason for rejecting Christianity.

“More particularly,—some men are destitute of every noble principle; they are full of deceit, avarice, pride, and sensuality. We see them abuse the gifts of nature, and of providence: is it wonderful, then, if they pervert Christianity too, and entertain different ideas of many of its doctrines, from men of goodness and humility? It is no more an objection against Christianity being from God, because such persons err from its purity, than that the gifts of nature and of providence come not from God, because they use them in a different manner from wise and holy men. Weakness of intellect will produce peculiarities of sentiment on every subject, and consequently on religion. The prejudices of education, and early habits, will generate attachments to certain opinions and rites; hence, also, differences in religion will arise: but the fault is not in Christianity, it is in man. From similar causes we see a diversity of judgment among the learned respecting sciences of great utility,—namely, medicine, law, politics, philosophy: but notwithstanding this, all allow them to be highly beneficial to mankind; none deny their usefulness, although people differ about some particular points. To reject the Gospel, because bad men pervert it, and weak men deform it, and angry men quarrel about it, and bigotted men look sour on others, and curse them because they do not agree in every tittle with themselves, displays the same folly, as if a person should cut down a tree bearing abundance of delicious fruit, and furnishing a refreshing shade, because caterpillars disfigured the leaves, and spiders made their webs among the branches.”

Mr. Gordon. “I have no objection at present to offer to the fair explanation of the difficulty which has

often perplexed me; but you will permit me to refer you to my former question,—Do you think that Christianity will ever be universally established?”

Mr. Llewellyn. “I do, Sir; and my belief is founded on the following basis. It is adapted for a universal religion; it foretels the fact of its universal establishment; its disciples are commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ to seek its universal propagation; and it is now spreading itself with unexampled rapidity through the nations of the earth. You cannot, Sir, but be conscious that the aspect of the times indicates some approaching change in the destinies of man; and though you, on your principles, cannot hail any redeeming power, by which the curse that inflicts such mighty evils on suffering humanity can be rolled away, yet we can on ours: and hence, while you are left to speculate on the charms of a philosophy which has never ameliorated the moral condition of man, we can speak with confidence of the intervention of *Him*, who will turn the curse into a blessing, and make this earth the abode of purity, of harmony, and of bliss.”

Mr. Gordon. “But how do you expect this mysterious change to be brought about?”

Mr. Llewellyn. “Not by force. This has been employed on some former occasions; but a conversion to Christianity which is effected by such means produces no change in the human character. The *man* remains the same, though his professed belief may vary. The circulation of the Scriptures—the distribution of religious treatises—and the preaching of the Gospel, are the only means which we are permitted to employ to accomplish this great design. But even after these means have been used, in the most judicious manner, and amongst every part of the human population, we do not calculate on accomplishing the purpose which we have in view, without the concurring influence of a supernatural power; for it is not by the power of man, that the demon of superstition is to be dethroned, or Christianity established, but by the Spirit of the Lord.”

[No. 63.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

ON THE BENEVOLENCE OF GOD.



“Go to Calvary! What a wonderful scene strikes my senses! The heavens grow black—the rocks burst asunder—the thunder of the Lord waxeth louder and louder—the vail of the magnificent temple is rent asunder by an invisible hand—the dead arise, and appear in the holy city! What event do these prodigies attest?”

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1824.

ON THE BENEVOLENCE OF GOD.

“Survey the wondrous cure!
And at each step let higher wonder rise!
Pardon for infinite offence! and pardon
Through means that speak its value infinite!
A pardon bought with blood!—with blood divine!—
With blood of Him I made my foe!
Persisted to provoke! though woo’d, and aw’d,
Blest and chastis’d, a flagrant rebel still!
A rebel, ’midst the thunders of his throne!
Nor I alone! a rebel universe!
My species up in arms! not one exempt!
Yet, for the foulest of the foul he dies,
Most joy’d for the redeem’d from deepest guilt!
As if our race were held of highest rank,
And Godhead dearer as more kind to man!” *Young.*

MR. MACFARLIN and his sister declined accompanying their father on the following Sabbath morning, having resolved to hear the Rev. Mr. ——. As they entered his chapel they were struck with the size of the congregation, and the great degree of seriousness which pervaded it; and when they saw him rise in the pulpit, they were immediately prepossessed in his favour. His voice and action were perfectly natural—his language, if not classically elegant, was nervous—he appeared animated by the spirit of devotion—and, by the earnestness of his manner, convinced the whole audience that he felt the importance of the truth which he delivered, and that he wished them to feel it. He introduced a few figures into his discourse, which were chosen for the purpose of illustration rather than embellishment, and which, like those of the Scripture, were generally selected from the appearances of nature, or the services of the Hebrew temple; but his forte lay in the correctness of his reasoning, and the force of his appeals to the conscience of his hearers. Having read his text, which was taken from 1 John iv. 8. *God is love*, and made a few introductory remarks, he said, “I will,

“I. Shew that the scheme of redemption which is revealed in the Scripture, gives us decisive proofs in favour of the benevolence of God.

“Proofs of the divine benevolence may be gathered from the wide extended scene of the visible creation, and also from the harmonious operations of providence; but

I rather choose, on the present occasion, to restrict myself to those which arise from the great scheme of redemption. Allow me, then,

“1. To advert to the *character* and *condition* of those for whom it has been devised, as a proof that *God is love*.

“It is generally acknowledged, that we are affected by the tale of misery in a degree which bears some proportion to the original state of the sufferer, or the superior endowments which he possesses. Suppose, for example, two individuals were labouring under the same sentence of condemnation:—the one, a man of a strong mind—a fascinating genius—a brilliant imagination—whose figure, and whose manners bore the marks of the most exquisite polish—and who had moved in a high orbit of existence;—the other a comparatively mean, ignorant, and uncultivated being; over which would your sympathy spread with the most delicate sensibilities? and if mercy could be obtained *only* for *one*, to which would you rush to administer it? I know! But, *My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord*. From the lofty heights of eternity Mercy looked down, and beheld the angelic and the human nature involved in guilt, and in misery; but she passed by the nature which presented the strongest physical and intellectual attractions, to rescue man, ‘doomed to die’—man, in whose warm bosom no love to God was cherished, but the most deep-rooted enmity—on whose moral character no lineaments of the divine image could be traced, but rather the evil passions which degrade and defile—and who occupied such an insignificant station in the vast universe, that if he had been annihilated he would scarcely have been missed. *For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham*.

“And what part of the human race calls forth this spontaneous expression of benevolence? We know that the moral character of man varies, from the most delicate amiability, to the most brutal and savage ferocity; and if we had been permitted to have speculated on the exercise of mercy, we should have predicted that it would have been monopolized by the most virtuous;—we should have concluded, that the amiable, the

intelligent, and the honourable would have been admitted to a participation of its blessings, while the more debased and ignorant would have been left to perish in their sins. But, saith the Lord, *My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways.* It is true, the more virtuous are not denied mercy, but it is not confined to them;—they are not forbidden to indulge the hope of final happiness, but they are not permitted exclusively to enjoy it; as the Gospel of Jesus Christ makes provision for the salvation of the chief of sinners, and frequently selects those whom men abhor, as the objects of its compassion, while the self-complacent, and the self-righteous are left under the delusions of their own fancy. Hence said our Lord to the elders, and chief priests of Israel, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous; and despised others, *Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.* How pure and ardent must be that love, which could pass by the angels who kept not their first estate, to rescue fallen man from the awful peril of his condition—and which often passes by the more attractive members of the human family, to save the most guilty, the most depraved, and the most unhappy!

“2. The superior state of bliss to which man is ultimately to be raised, is another proof that *God is love.*

“Man, when created, was placed in the garden of Eden; and if ever a local residence was favourable to human felicity, Eden could boast of unrivalled charms. Intersected with flowing streams—decorated with the most majestic trees, and with the choicest shrubs and flowers creation could supply—rendered melodious by the varied, yet harmonious notes of the feathered tribe—and visited by the occasional presence of the King Eternal—who threw over his uncreated glories a visible form, which, softening their radiance, added, if not to their grandeur, yet to their beauty. Here man dwelt. His eye gazed on a cloudless sky—his ear listened to the song of the earliest bird—his nostrils inhaled the breath of uncorrupted morn—his heart felt the sublimity of bliss. He sinned—Discord rushed from her retreat—Misery started up from every bower in Paradise—the thunder of the divine displeasure rolled in loud and

lengthened peals over the once tranquil place—and when concealed, as he thought, amidst the thick-set trees, the voice of insulted Majesty was heard, saying, *Adam, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?* The ground is immediately accursed—the agent of seduction is at once doomed to punishment—and man is driven from his beloved abode into the wide world, in which he has wandered from that fatal hour to the present, the slave of passion, and the victim of grief. Multifarious rites have been practised, and the most costly sacrifices have been offered up, to appease the vengeance of Heaven; but it still goes forth against the children of disobedience. But must we despair? No, my brethren! *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

“And you who believe in Christ will attain a higher state of honour, and of bliss, than you would have acquired if the catastrophe of the fall had never happened.

“(1.) A higher state of honour.

“Had man never sinned, he would have stood in the relation of a servant, or a subject of the great King; but now, being mystically united to Jesus Christ, and adopted by an act of grace, he bears the endearing epithet of a son. *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

“(2.) A higher state of felicity.

“Had man never sinned, his felicity would have run on in a smooth and even current, liable to no fluctuations—no impediments—no swellings. His removal from earth to heaven, if that event had ever taken place, would have increased his happiness, but we have no means of ascertaining the exact proportion. But now, my friends, trace a redeemed sinner through this scene of mortality, and of woe, till you behold him before the throne of God, and of the Lamb; and while conscious

that he enjoys all the sources of bliss which he would have enjoyed had he entered glory from a Paradisaical state of innocence, you will perceive that his most exalted felicity arises from his redemption. *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

"3. The means by which this state of future felicity is obtained, is another decisive proof that *God is love*.

"What are the means? Go to Calvary! What a wonderful scene strikes my senses! The heavens grow black—the rocks burst asunder—the thunder of the Lord waxeth louder and louder—the vail of the magnificent temple is rent asunder by an invisible hand—the dead arise, and appear in the holy city! What event do these prodigies attest? Tell us, ye ministering spirits, who dwell near the throne of the Eternal!—That *God is love*! What! love selecting for its heralds the eclipse—the earthquake—and the tempest! Yes! Amidst these awful movements of Nature, in her disturbed condition, we behold God giving his only-begotten Son for the salvation of man; and his death, which consummates the scheme of mercy, is the event which these strange prodigies announce! He dies, *the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.*

"But could not the salvation of man have been effected by some other expedient? The question is improper. It is not our province to dictate to the Redeemer the terms of our redemption, nor the means by which it is to be accomplished. Such are the means which infinite wisdom has devised for our salvation; and if we reject them, *there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries.*

"4. The method by which we enjoy the blessings of this scheme of redemption—the unlimited extent to which they are to be conveyed—and the provision which is made to guard against their universal rejection, are other proofs that *God is love*.

"The leading blessings which flow to us through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus are, remission of sin—the sanctification of our nature—consolation suited to

the varied afflictions of life—and the prospect of eternal glory.

“How is the remission of sin to be obtained? Are you required, like the modern pagan, to undertake a distant and dangerous pilgrimage, leaving your family exposed to the insults of the proud—and liable to the pressure of want? No! *For through Christ we have access by one Spirit unto the Father. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*

“How is your nature to be purified? Are you, like the deluded Hindoo, to expose yourself to the scorching heat of a tropical sun?—are you to submit to the deep laceration of self-inflicted torture, before you can be redeemed from the bondage of corruption, and regain that high elevation of moral excellence from which you are fallen? No! *God purifieth your hearts by faith.* Faith brings before the mind those facts, and those doctrines—those promises, and those threatenings, which have a natural tendency to destroy the love of sin, and to subdue its power.

“How are the consolations of mercy obtained? Not by the incantations of superstition, nor the mere force of philosophical reasoning; but by the belief of those exceeding great and precious promises with which the Scriptures abound. And is not faith the evidence of things unseen, as well as the substance of things hoped for? *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*”

“Under the Levitical dispensation, Mercy, like a titular deity, seemed confined to one place, and her blessings were almost exclusively confined to one people. Her residence was within the vail, and from between the cherubim she uttered her responses to the tribes of Israel. But now she has taken the wings of the morning, and following the course of the sun, her going forth is from the end of the heaven, and her circuit to the ends of it, and no human being is hid from the light thereof. Did not our Lord declare that *this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come?*

See him before his ascension, even while the scars of Golgotha were still fresh on his sacred person, gathering around him his faithful apostles, and hear the last injunction which fell from his lips. *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

"Wherever man resides, thither the scheme of redemption may be conveyed: and though it abounds, in its historical details, in references and allusions to the phenomena of the country in which it was revealed, and in which it was perfected, and to the civil and religious customs of the people to whose care it was first intrusted, yet neither its doctrines, nor its precepts—neither its rites, nor its institutions, discover any local peculiarities, which would restrict its progress, or limit its duration. 'Its blessings are such as all may enjoy—its services such as all may perform—and its injunctions such as all may obey.'

"And though these blessings are to be conveyed through the instrumentality of men who possess no ability to secure their reception, yet these men stand in alliance with an invisible agency, which can make the barbarian, and the Scythian, the bond, and the free, willing in the day of Jehovah's power. Hence our preachers are not dependent for success on the force of moral suasion; neither do they expect to triumph over the passions and prejudices of the human heart by the splendour of evidence, or the charms of eloquence—regarding themselves as the mere instruments through whom the Holy Ghost exerts his resistless energy. And who can withstand, when he arises to promote the growing empire of the Redeemer? What mind can remain impervious to the rays of truth, when he exhibits it? What prejudices can retain their strong hold, when he sends forth the subduing efficacy of his grace? *My word, saith the Lord, shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereto I send it.*

"II. Consider what practical influence it should have on our minds.

"1. The benevolence of God, as displayed in the scheme of redemption, should become a subject of intense meditation.

"Nature throws out attractions, in some of her departments, which invite the traveller to leave his home, and his country, only to gaze on them. And when he reaches the enchanted spot, from whence he can see the lofty pyramid, losing its top amidst the clouds of heaven—or the long extended valley, where vegetation, in her varied forms, puts forth all her magnificence and beauty—where the burning mountain is casting up its liquid flames—or the cataract is thundering amidst the solemn stillness of deserted declivities, into what transports is he thrown!—nor is it till the scenes become familiar to his senses, that he has power to take a sketch, or describe an object. He passes on till he sees the splendid monuments of ancient times, mouldering in ruins; but does he not feel rich in mental excitement, amidst the desolations which Athens, which Corinth, which Jerusalem still exhibit? And shall the unconscious scenes of nature, which, after the lapse of a few more centuries, will form part of the general conflagration—shall the mutations of Providence, which are only serviceable as they make us wiser and better, awaken the most impassioned interest in the breast of the sentimental tourist? and shall the great scheme of redemption by the death of Jesus Christ, pass rapidly over the mind, as though it were too puerile to fix our attention? God forbid! But, brethren, I must not conceal from you the astonishing fact, that it is treated with contemptuous scorn by the great majority to whom it is revealed. 'They deem it low and worthless; and they attempt to vindicate their conduct by saying, with the unbelieving Jews, "Which of the scribes or rulers—which of the learned or dignified of our church, make it the theme of their beautiful addresses, or eloquent harangues? Which of our celebrated men of science, discrimination, and taste, make it the object of their study, or the subject of their discourse? Does not the preaching of it provoke contempt, and expose the minister to the degrading imputation of Methodism and fanaticism?" And yet angels, fascinated by its charms, suspending their studies of nature, and their lofty pursuits in heaven, descend from the celestial world to look into it; and whilst they look, they discover new beauties, and new wonders incessantly

arising, which induce them again to look, and continue the research. They bend, and again they bend their lofty minds, and cannot quit the object; and by their conduct they seem to unite in sentiment with the Apostle,—*Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.*’ And shall angels, who have no direct interest in this subject, be captivated by its beauties, and shall we remain insensible to them? Shall they turn away from the overpowering grandeur of the heavenly world, to pry into the hidden mysteries of the cross, and shall we treat them with indifference? God forbid! But there is no danger that you, who have felt the burden of sin, will ever be guilty of such a crime. There is no danger that you, who have derived from it your purest joy, and your most sublime anticipations, will ever be accused of such a species of criminal folly and base ingratitude. You can adopt the language of the Apostle, as descriptive of the deep interest which you take in this supremely important subject;—*God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

“2. It ought to become a subject of *devout imitation*. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.*

“If, my brethren, you wish to cherish and display that spirit of benevolence towards others, which God has manifested in the scheme of human redemption, it will be absolutely necessary that you should take that specific view of their character and condition which the Sacred Writers have given us. There are many Christians in modern times, who will weep over the ruins of Carthage, and pour forth their bitter lamentations near the site where Athens once displayed her unrivalled grandeur—who will mingle their sympathies with the sufferers of Ionia and Marathon, who were doomed to witness the extinction of science, and the destruction of empire;—who contemplate the fall of man from his original state of purity and honour, with cool indifference, or impiously declare, that he is as pure, and as

perfect, as when first formed by the power of Jehovah. They speak in raptures of the dignity and happiness of the human species, even while the groans of misery are issuing from almost every receptacle of humanity—and unblushingly assert, that no derangement has taken place in the social system, though the history of man is little more than the public record of his ambition, cruelty, fraud, and injustice. To reason with such men is an act of folly, as they seem, on this subject, incapable of feeling the force of the most palpable evidence; and the only alternative which remains to us is, to pity their incorrigible insensibility, and to guard ourselves against the paralyzing and neutralizing influence of their opinions. To expect that such men would ever become the philanthropists of the age in which they live, would be no less visionary, than to expect that the author of all evil would, if permitted, come and repair the moral injury which he has done amongst us. And though they may, from birth, and accidental associations, stand connected with Christianity in some of the external forms of her establishment, yet they are no less devoid of her spirit, than the avowed infidels, who reject her revelations as fabulous, and her pretensions as absurd.

“You must view man as a fallen and a guilty creature, before you will feel the tenderness of pity for him. You must view him as in a state of rebellion against the authority of God, and as exposed to the terrors of his righteous displeasure, or you will never feel that deep and paramount anxiety on his behalf, which will impel you to aim at his salvation. You must not allow the few *social* virtues, which *sometimes* bud and blossom on his character, to induce you to suppose that his moral condition, in relation to God, is less awful and perilous than the Scriptures represent—or that he stands in less need of the cleansing efficacy of the blood of atonement, and the purifying influence of the Holy Spirit, than when he appears in the more repelling form of the bold and profligate transgressor!

“Be ye, then, imitators of God; and as he has given his only-begotten Son, to die, *the just for the unjust*, do all in your power to convey a knowledge of this fact to every human being. Suffer no false principles of reasoning—no selfish calculations—no considerations of

personal ease, to induce you to suppress your tender pity—to smother your strong anxieties—or to withhold your zealous exertions, till all the members of the human family know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, whom to know is life eternal.

“Often meditate on the conduct of the Lord Jesus Christ; *who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* And why should you meditate on the original dignity, and on the abasement of the Redeemer, but to possess the same spirit of condescension and benevolence which he so finely and majestically displayed? Meditate on the greatness of his humiliation—on the intensity of his sufferings—on the ardour of his love,—and go forth into the world with the same mind—and let every place you visit, and every individual with whom you come in contact, feel the moral influence of your Christian benevolence. The world may reproach you for your fanaticism, if they see you devoted to the cause of Christ—and may impeach your good sense, if you speak in raptures of the love of God to man, as displayed in the plan of redemption; but be regardless of its revilings, and offer the same apology for your conduct which the Apostle once offered for his own, and his fellow-labourers:—*For the love of Christ constraineth us.*

“But if you reject this scheme of redemption; or treat it with cool indifference, how shall you escape from the overflowings of the divine displeasure? Do you not know, on the authority of the Scriptures, that *the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.*”

[No. 64.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

MISS HOLMES.

PART VI.



“Just as this question was proposed, they were startled by a deep groan, that came from the interior of a plantation of evergreens near which they were walking; and, on running to afford some assistance to the sufferer, they beheld their facetious sister Emma, with her group of young friends, attempting to conceal themselves among the trees.”

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1824.

MISS HOLMES.

PART VI.

"But certain it is, that the doctrine has been so injudiciously meddled with—it has tempted so many ingenious and speculative men to transgress the limits of the Scripture—it had engendered so much presumption amongst some, and so much despondency amongst others, it has been so much abused to the mischief of practical Christianity, that it were well for us all, could we carefully draw the line between the secret things which belong to God, and the things which are revealed, and belong to us and our children."

Chalmers.

A LARGE party dined at the Elms, consisting principally of Mr. Holmes's old civic friends, who came, according to an annual custom, to talk over the events of "olden times," and enjoy the pleasures of social intercourse. They had all sprung from an obscure origin—commenced business about the same time—and were now in the possession of considerable wealth. When the cloth was removed, the worthy host said, he would give a toast, which he hoped the ladies would honour, as they were deeply interested in the sentiment of it; though he admitted he ought to apologize for attempting to revive a practice which was now become almost obsolete amongst them. "Prosperity to the citizens of London; and may they ever express their gratitude to God, by supporting the institutions of benevolence." This toast was drank standing, when the ladies withdrew, leaving the gentlemen to their debates and discussions.

Mrs. Holmes proposed a walk. It was a fine tranquil evening: a gentle breeze sprang up as the sun descended his western course; and the party was regaled with the last notes of the yellow-hammer, intermingling themselves with the early song of the nightingale. They sauntered along together, till they gradually paired off, and became scattered through the walks of the garden, or the paths of the lawn and the grove, which environed the back part of the mansion.

"Yonder," said *Miss Holmes*, to her sister Jane, who was her companion, "is old Mrs. Kent's cottage! It is a beautiful object, when viewed from this mound. Come and look at it." "Indeed it is," replied *Jane*; "she has discovered great taste in the intermixture of

evergreens by which it is adorned, and the arrangement of the flowers which shed their fragrance around it. But its chief glory is within." "Very true, my dear," said *Miss Holmes*; "it is a sacred spot—often visited by unseen messengers, when they come to earth on errands of mercy. It is a little sanctuary, in which the sacrifice of prayer and of praise is offered up to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and which he protects by his power, and enlivens and animates by his presence. Strangers would pass by, and admire only the neatness of its external appearance, but we have seen its *concealed* beauties." "I was much struck with her manners," said *Jane*, "and could not avoid the impression, that she had once moved in refined society. She certainly possesses a very superior mind, for a person in her situation." "There is nothing," *Miss Holmes* replied, "which gives such a high polish to the human character, as the influence of religion, when it is felt in early life. It refines the taste, without making it fastidious—enlarges the intellect, without engendering a spirit of vanity—softens, and sweetens the temper—and inspires a consciousness of individual worth and importance, even while it pays a respectful regard to the laws and customs which prevail in society. Hence a Christian appears as dignified in a cottage as in a mansion; and living comparatively disengaged from the temptations of the world, he is more at liberty to commune with the Redeemer, by which he imperceptibly receives a finer and more correct impression of his lovely image."

"But do you think," said *Jane*, "that every Christian exemplifies the correctness of your remarks?" "No, my dear. Some do not feel the influence of religion till late in life, when their taste has been vitiated—their habits formed—and their tempers set; and though it will correct many of the evils which they have contracted, yet it rarely gives such an exquisite polish to the character, as it would have done if they had felt its transforming power at an earlier period." "I was so much delighted," said *Jane*, "with the old lady's spirit, and manners, and conversation, that I should like to go and spend an hour with her. Cannot we contrive to steal away from the party?" "I should like to accompany you," *Miss Holmes* replied, "but it would not be pru-

dent. We have a character to maintain, and it would not do for *us* to sacrifice the laws of politeness to gratify even our best inclinations. We must walk in wisdom towards them that are without, or we shall cause our good to be evil spoken of." "Very true. But why did you lay the emphasis on *we* and *us*, when you must be aware that I have no religious character to maintain." "I have thought that my dear Jane has lately felt the first impressions of truth upon her mind. Am I mistaken?"

Just as this question was proposed, they were startled by a deep groan, that came from the interior of a plantation of evergreens near which they were walking, and on running to afford some assistance to the sufferer, they beheld their facetious sister Emma with a group of young friends, attempting to conceal themselves amongst the trees. "What's the matter?" "Nothing, Ladies; oh nothing!" "We were afraid, from the groan we heard, that some one was ill." "It was Miss Emma, feigning illness, to disturb you in your grave musings." "I am happy," said *Miss Holmes*, "that it was only a feigned illness; and I do not regret having been disturbed in our musings, as it appears to have contributed to your innocent mirth." "I have taken the ladies," said *Miss Emma*, "to the cottage, and we have had an interview with Mrs. Kent." "O what a lovely place!" exclaimed several voices. "How I should like to live in that beautiful cottage!" said a little girl; "I wish grandpapa would buy such a one for me. What beautiful flowers!" "The old lady," said another, "was reading her Bible when we tapped at the door, and she rose and received us with as much grace as though she had been a duchess. She is an intelligent, and, if I judge from her appearance and manners, a very contented woman. She is, I believe, very religious in her way. Is she not, Miss Holmes?" "Yes." "She is at a good age to become religious, and she has nothing else to engage her attention. I should like to have another interview with her before she goes to heaven; but the distance, you know, my dear Miss Holmes, is so great, and my engagements are so numerous, that I cannot calculate on such a gratification." "We shall be happy to see you at any time, and I shall be very glad to

accompany you." "O yes, I know you would; but as my *propensity* is to be religious, *I must check it*, or *I shall get quite unhappy*. It won't do for me to associate much with such devout people." "Here are the gentlemen."—"Come, Ladies; tea is waiting.—We have lost you.—You have forgotten the hour."

The party began to move off about ten o'clock, just as the moon arose to illumine the evening shade; when the family, being left alone, resumed their seats for a few minutes before they retired to rest. "This has been a pleasant day," said *Mr. Holmes*; "for though our friends are not all religious people, yet they are very excellent members of society." "It must be a high gratification to you, father," said the eldest son, "to see the companions of your youth sitting around your table, with their children, at such an advanced period of your age, and by mutual intercourse bringing back to your recollection the early incidents of your life." "Indeed it is, my son; and I hope God has reserved the same enjoyment for you all: and then, when I am resting in the grave with my fathers, you will think and talk of these gone-by days of my earthly pleasure."

On Miss Holmes's return from London, where she had been spending a few days with her brothers, she found the following letter from her esteemed friend, Mrs. Loader, which she read with deep interest.

"MY DEAR LOUISA,

"The calamity we have been so long dreading has at length fallen upon us; and though we are not left without consolation, yet we are in the deep waters. The dear little sufferer struggled through the severity of the winter, and began, with the opening spring, to regain her vivacity and strength; but the disorder returned upon her with great violence about three weeks since, and terminated in her death on the 13th. She was very reserved on religious topics, till she heard the doctor say there was no hope; when, seeing us bathed in tears, she said, with great composure, 'Don't weep for me, nor yet sorrow as those who have no hope. I shall die; but I have a good hope through grace, that when the *earthly house of this tabernacle* shall be dis-

solved, I have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. This communication burst upon us with all the enlivening effect of the sun breaking through a dark and portentous cloud, and our sorrow was immediately turned into joy. The dear mother clasped her child in her arms, and said, 'I can now resign you. My prayers are answered, and I am happy.' 'I have now lived *almost* long enough,' said the dear girl. 'You wish, then, to live a little longer, my dear.' 'Yes, Mamma.' 'What for?' 'To see my father cease from weeping, and to hear him say that he can resign me.' You know that she was her father's idol; and the prospect of having her torn away by the relentless hand of death, broke down his firm and heroic spirit, and he became absorbed in grief. But when he heard this language fall from the lips of his dying child, new life and vigour came into him, and he replied, though his voice faltered as he spoke, and his countenance turned pale while giving utterance to his determination, 'I will resign you, my dear, dear girl, and indulge the hope of meeting you where we shall never part again.' I sat with her during the last few days and nights of her suffering, and witnessed her triumphant death. Indeed it was a triumphant death. She requested to be raised up in her bed, and looking round upon us with a sweet ineffable smile, she remained silent for a few moments, and then repeated the last verse of her favourite hymn with great animation, and asked us to sing it.

'I'll speak the honours of thy name
With my last labouring breath,
Then speechless clasp thee in my arms,
My joy in life and death.'

While singing these lines her head gradually fell back on the arms of her mother, and she gently breathed her last as she fell asleep in Jesus. And now I will endeavour to mitigate my own pungent sorrows by attempting to alleviate yours.

"I am happy to hear that the remarks which I made in my last, on the difference between a full assurance of faith, and a full assurance of hope, have afforded you so much relief; and though I cannot say that you will *derive the same degree of satisfaction from my present*

reply to your other questions, yet I will give you all the assistance in my power. I certainly feel astonished, that so good a man as Mr. Corrie should ever say, *that no true believer in Jesus Christ can doubt his personal election to eternal life*. Surely he must have been off his guard when he made use of such a very censurable expression. It is faith in Christ that constitutes us believers; and we may believe in him even before we have our attention directed to the doctrine of personal election. Our faith in him, when it is of the operation of the Spirit of God, is a permanent principle—the incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever: but if Mr. C.'s remark be correct, we shall be compelled to admit, that it may leave us when we have any doubt of the fact of our original ordination to eternal life. If no believer *can* doubt his personal election to eternal life, why does the Apostle exhort us to give diligence to make our calling and election sure? The very exhortation supposes, that those to whom it is addressed are yet in a state either of ignorance or doubt, on the subject to which it refers. The following quotation, from the pen of the celebrated Dr. Chalmers, is so very excellent, that I shall offer no apology for its insertion.

“It is not in the power of the elect to make their election surer in itself than it really is; for this is a sureness which is not capable of receiving an addition. It is not in their power to make it surer to God; for all futurity is submitted to his all-seeing eye, and his absolute knowledge stands in need of no confirmation. But there is such a thing as the elect being ignorant, for a time, of their own election, and their being made sure of it in the progress of evidence and discovery. And therefore it is that they are called to make their election sure to themselves, or to make themselves sure of their election. And how is this to be done? Not by reading it in the book of God's decrees—not by obtaining from him any direct information about his counsels—not by conferring with prophet or angel, gifted with the revelation of hidden things. But the same God who elects some to everlasting life, and keeps back from them all information about it, tells them, that he who believeth, and he who repenteth, and he who obeyeth the Gospel, shall obtain everlasting life. We shall never, in this

world, have an immediate communication from him, whether we are of the elect or not; but let us believe—let us repent—let us obey the Saviour; and from the first moment of our setting ourselves to these things in good earnest, we may conceive the hope of a place amongst the heirs of immortality. In the progress and success of our endeavours, this hope may advance, and grow brighter within us. As we grow in the exercises of faith and obedience, the light of a cheering manifestation is more sensibly felt, and our hope ripens into assurance. *Hereby do we know that we know him, by our keeping his commandments*, is an evidence which every year becomes clearer, and more encouraging.’

“If you believe in Christ, and feel the moral influence of that belief, purifying your heart, and enabling you to resist the temptations, and triumph over the allurements of the world—inducing within you a class of sentiment and feeling of a new and spiritual order—throwing open before you the vanities of the visible, and the glories of the unseen state, you will, as you advance, endeavour to *ascertain the source from whence you derived it*. A moment’s reflection will convince you, that it did not rise spontaneously in your breast; nor is it the result of a philosophical inquiry into the divine origin of the system of truth which you have embraced. By consulting the Scripture you are taught, that faith is the gift of God; and is not this statement confirmed by your own experience? Have you not, my dear friend, often, in those hallowed moments when you have withdrawn yourself from the cares and pleasures of things which are seen and temporal, to meditate on those which are unseen and eternal, offered up your devout thanksgivings to the God of all grace for bestowing this inestimable gift on you? Have you not poured forth the expressions of your gratitude in one continuous flow of a lofty and sublime praise? Have you not, again and again, given utterance to your deep amazement at the Divine condescension, in noticing you when you were forgetting Him?—and at the munificence of his grace, in imparting that precious faith in Jesus Christ, by which you have been brought into a holy and indissoluble union with him?

“As this gift came from him unmerited, if not unso-

licited, you must admit that it was bestowed as the *result of design*. He intended to make the communication before he did make it. The intention, then, was prior to its execution. You were specifically chosen to receive the gift, before that gift was actually conveyed. The length of time which elapsed after the intention was formed, before it was finally accomplished, is a circumstance of no great importance in deciding the question of your personal election to receive the gift, and its attendant and consequent blessings.

"But what is the testimony of Scripture on this point?—that infallible oracle, to whose authority we implicitly submit. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.* And does not the Apostle Peter, when addressing the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, say, *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.*

"This doctrine, I know, is sometimes invested with a degree of terror which appals the feelings of a young Christian, and he is forbidden to approach it; but when we view it in connection with the other truths of the great scheme of redemption, and our own personal experience, it assumes a different aspect, and becomes, not only an exciting cause of gratitude, but a security to our faith, our hope, our peace, and our final salvation. If, my dear Louisa, you suppose the recent change which has taken place in you is the mere result of your own uninfluenced determination; or if you imagine that it has been produced by a supernatural power, without any respect to a preconceived intention, or ulterior design, what assurance can you possess that you may not relapse, when the novel impressions which have

attended it die away, into your former state of indifference or insensibility? But if you can trace up the great change to its divine Author, and view it as inseparably connected with the accomplishment of his final design respecting you, it will appear as an integral and essential part of the economy of grace, which gives security to the permanency of your faith, and a high degree of certainty to your blissful anticipations. Then let us see how the application of this doctrine becomes a source of confidence and joy. Are you brought, under a full and deep conviction of your guilt and unworthiness, to place all your dependence on Jesus Christ for pardon and eternal life? Cannot you see, in this act of reliance, a consolatory argument in favour of your personal election? Does not our Lord say, *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out?* Does not this prove, that if you come to Christ it is because you were given to him by the Father? while, at the same time, it gives you a sacred pledge that you shall not be rejected? Does he not say, *No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day?* Your coming to the Saviour is the consequence of the Father's drawing you; and the final issue will be, that he will raise you up from the slumbers of the tomb, and conduct you to the possession of glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life. If you have been renewed in the spirit of your mind, cannot you trace the operations of the divine Agent, and read the language of the Apostle with peculiar delight?—*Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.* If you are seeking after the higher attainments of the Christian character, and devoting yourself, according to the degree of knowledge and strength which you possess, to a life of practical godliness, cannot you perceive how you are unconsciously attempting to supply those moral evidences of your calling and election, which will afford yourself and others entire satisfaction? And when anticipating, in some favoured moment, the glory that awaits you, do you not feel conscious that you shall then ascribe the final consummation of your bliss to Him, who loved you before you loved

him—to Him, who washed you from your sins in his own blood, and admitted you into his temple to serve him day and night for ever?

“I am not surprized, my dear Louisa, that you should sometimes fear that you make a retrograde movement, rather than a progressive advancement, in knowledge and in grace. A clearer, and a more abasing view of our own sinfulness and unworthiness is one of the extraordinary symptoms of our more intimate fellowship with the Holy One, and of our more entire conformity to him. I call it an extraordinary symptom, not because it is contrary to the common course of Christian experience, but because it is so directly opposed to the expectations of the young disciple. He imagines that in his progress he shall disengage himself from the influence of sinful passions and propensities—have his heart rapidly purified from the contaminating touch of evil—and become so assimilated to the purity of the divine nature, as to live in the midst of the corruptions of the world, without sustaining any injury from their contagious influence. But, alas! he is disappointed. As he gets nearer and nearer the fountain of light, his own imperfections become more distinctly visible, and in proportion as his views of the purity of God become enlarged, he loathes himself. This remark, I have no doubt, will bring to your remembrance the language of Job. *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* ‘I have heard others speak of the glory of thy majesty, and of thy power, and of thy wisdom; and I have been delighted and awed by the descriptions which they have given: but now thou hast made a direct manifestation of thy purity and of thy justice to me, *I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*’ This established law in the economy of the divine dispensation towards men, will enable you to account for the very strong expressions which the most eminent Christians often employ when speaking of themselves, and for that entire dependence which they place in their last moments on the atonement of Christ for salvation; rarely rising above the language of the publican,—*God be merciful to me a sinner,*—and *confessing, that if they are saved, no one of the innu-*

merable multitude will have greater cause to adore the unmerited grace of God.

"I would advise you, then, to proceed in the diligent use of the means of instruction and consolation with which you are so highly favoured, and you will find obscurities gradually vanishing—the difficulties which now oppress and perplex you will receive an explanation which will satisfy you—and when you become more familiar with the Scriptures, you will feel less disposed to allow the crude opinions of the injudicious, or the partial defects of your own character, to rob you of that peace which the Saviour hath given to you.

"I am delighted with your account of the widow Kent. You must favour me with more particulars. Her local habitation, and the beauty of the surrounding scenery will give to her simple testimony something of the air of romance, especially if you visit her in the cool of the evening. And though the sublime truths of Revelation do not require such a circumstance to add to their beauty, or increase their importance, yet as we are sensitive creatures, whose best affections are allowed to be excited through an exterior medium, I see no objection to the expedient which I have suggested. If she be a woman of a *correct taste*, I would recommend you to take your sister Emma with you, that she may witness the moral effects of undefiled religion, in one who derives from it a happiness, more pure and substantial than earth can supply. But if not, do not permit her to accompany you, lest its lustre should appear obscured in the uncouthness of the terms which may be employed to describe, or recommend it. I am anxious to hear more about Jane. Why do you not, by some direct appeal, ascertain the exact state of her mind?

"You wish me to say *when* I can visit the Elms, but I cannot do it. It would be an act of cruelty, which I am sure you would not willingly allow me to commit, to leave the house of mourning, in its present disconsolate state, to partake of the pleasures of recreation. With kind regards to all the members of your family,

"Yours, &c."

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

THE IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

PART II.



"And having at length found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, greatly rejoicing, as a man in such circumstances naturally would; and when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, and says unto them with great pleasure, My friends, you may now rejoice with me; for my labour and search have not been in vain, but I have found my sheep which was lost. And as he thus is more delighted with the recovery of the sheep which he had lost, than with the safety of the rest, which had not wandered, so I say unto you, that greater, and more sensible joy will be in heaven, among the blessed and benevolent spirits that dwell there, over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance." Page 4,

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THE IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

PART II.

"He that hates the truth shall be the cupe of lies :
And he that will be cheated to the last,
Delusions strong as hell shall hold him fast :
But if the wanderer his mistake discern,
Judge his own ways, and sigh for a return ;
Bewilder'd once, must he bewail his loss
For ever, and for ever ? No—the cross !
There, and there only,

is the power to save.
There no delusive hope invites despair,
No mock'ry meets you, no deception there ;
The spells and charms that blinded you before,
All vanish there, and fascinate no more." Cowper.

By reading the Scripture, and a few other books, which fell in their way, Mr. and Miss Macfarlin were convinced, that there was some essential defect in the religious opinions in which they had been educated ; and though the discourse which they had heard on the benevolence of God, displayed in the scheme of human redemption, did not discover any profound argumentation, yet they were fully satisfied that it was more adapted to the real character and condition of man, than that system, which awards eternal life, *only to the virtuous*. A new scene now opened upon them ; and under the clear manifestation of that divine illumination, which proceeds from *the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning* ; they perceived their own guilt and danger, which rendered an application to him for mercy through the mediation of Jesus Christ, absolutely necessary, for their personal happiness. The imaginary charms with which their character had been invested, suddenly disappeared ; their conscience accused them of having withheld from God their supreme affection—of having violated his holy precepts—of having neglected to glorify and honour him ; and though they were not plunged into the depths of mental agony, yet a class of feelings was excited within their breast, which they had never previously endured.

On their return home, their Father expressed some

degree of surprise at their absence from Meeting ; when they very frankly confessed, that they had been to hear the Rev. Mr.—— “ But why,” said the old gentleman, “ did you leave the intelligent preaching of our learned minister, to hear the mysterious doctrines of Calvinism enforced ? Have you been as much pleased this morning as you were with the very excellent discourse you heard last Sunday ? ” “ The discourse which we heard last Sunday,” said the Son, “ we all thought very judicious and very excellent ; but we were both so much struck with the Doctor’s remark, that *the felicities of heaven are reserved only for the virtuous*, that we could not agree with him ; because on such an hypothesis we find that the vast majority in every age, and in every country would be consigned over to a state of hopeless misery.” “ And do you now think,” said the Father, “ that any other but virtuous people will ever be received into heaven ? ” “ As the subject of inquiry is new to us,” the Son replied, “ we cannot presume to speak on it with the same degree of accuracy as we should if we were more familiar with it ; but on searching the Scripture, which we have done rather closely during the past week, we find, that the ungodly—that transgressors—that those who are enemies to God by wicked works—that the children of disobedience—and that the chief of sinners, may be saved. This new view of the revelation of mercy, which is sanctioned by the current language of the Scripture, appears to us more consistent with the benevolence of the Supreme Being, and much better adapted to the real character and condition of the great mass of mankind, than the statement of the Doctor, which restricts the inestimable blessing of endless happiness, to a select few who have retained their virtue.”

“ By your permission, Papa,” said Miss Macfarlin, “ I will read Doddridge’s Paraphrase and Improvement of one of our Saviour’s Parables, which I think is so excellent, and so much in point, that it will afford you as much pleasure as it has given me.” “ Read it, my dear.” The parable is contained in the xvth chap. of the Gospel by Luke ; and the Paraphrase runs thus. “ *But [Jesus] for the encouragement of these few penitents, as well as to rebuke the censorious and uncharitable* [65

Pharisees, *spake to them this parable*, and said, *what man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine, that were feeding together in the pastures of the wilderness, and go from place to place in search after it, and having at length found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, greatly rejoicing, as a man in such circumstances naturally would; and when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, and says unto them with great pleasure, my friends, you may now rejoice with me; for my labour and search have not been in vain, but I have found my sheep which was lost. And as he thus is more delighted with the recovery of the sheep which he had lost, than with the safety of the rest, which had not wandered, so I say unto you that greater, and more sensible joy will be in heaven among the blessed and benevolent spirits that dwell there, over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance, or such a universal change of mind and character.*

"How graceful and lovely does *our Lord* appear, while thus opening his compassionate arms and heart to those wretched out-casts for *whose souls no man cared*. Who can choose but rejoice at this jubilee, which he proclaimed among them, and at the cheerful attention which they gave to these glad tidings of great joy? May we who are his followers, never despise the meanest, or the worst of men, when they seem disposed to receive religious instruction, but rather exert ourselves with a distinguished zeal, as knowing that the joy of the heavenly world, in their recovery, will be in some measure proportionable to the extremity of their former danger.

"Let us often recollect the charity and goodness of these *perfected spirits*, who look down from their own glory with compassion on mortals wandering in the *paths of the destroyer*, and who sing anthems of thankfulness and joy, when by divine grace they are reclaimed from them. Let every sinner be touched by a generous desire that he who has been in so many instances the offender and burden of *the earth*, may become the joy of heaven by his sincere conversion."

"You know, my children, that I have endeavoured to train you up in the paths of virtue; to give you, what I conceive, correct views of religion; but if you on examination, feel dissatisfied with any opinions which I have inculcated, you ought most certainly to renounce them. You have the same moral right to think, and judge, and decide for yourselves, as I have; and I feel too much respect for the right of private judgment, on religious topics, and too much affection for you, to throw on the path of your enquiry the slightest shadow of opposition. I know you are virtuous, which is a source of exquisite satisfaction to any mind; and if I see you happy, my bliss will be complete. You will proceed in your inquiries after truth with caution,—weigh with the greatest nicety the evidence which may be submitted to you,—as many opinions when they first strike our attention appear very specious and plausible, which will not endure the ordeal of a critical investigation. I cannot give you better advice, than that which the Apostle gave to the believers of Thessalonica, *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*"

In the course of the following week Miss Macfarlin received a visit from her amiable and pious young friend, who was not more astonished than delighted, by seeing her at the chapel, in——— on the preceding Sabbath. After a little desultory conversation, *Miss Reynolds* said, "We were rather surprised to see you and your brother at chapel on Sunday; but I hope we shall have the pleasure of seeing you there again."

Miss Macfarlin. "We were both so much impressed with the discourse, that it is our intention to hear Mr. ——— again; and if we approve of his ministry, we design to become stated worshippers amongst you. The system of Unitarianism in which we have been educated, may suit the virtuous part of society, who have no perceptions of the evil of sin; but as it makes no provision for the salvation of the ungodly, it cannot afford peace to a wounded conscience."

Miss Reynolds, "And has my dear Eliza at length discovered that she is a sinner!"

Miss Macfarlin. "I have not only discovered it, but I have felt it; and I still feel it. You know how I have repelled such a charge; but I can repel it no

tonger. I am forced to admit it. My conscience bears testimony to its truth. I cannot accuse myself of having violated any of the laws of social life, but I perceive that I have broken the law of God, and stand guilty in his sight."

Miss Reynolds. "As this is a new discovery, can you tell how you made it?"

Miss Macfarlin "The first circumstance which excited our attention was a very excellent sermon, preached a short time since by Dr. ——— on the felicity of heaven, which he said, *was reserved only for the virtuous*. When conversing together on the subject, in the evening of the Sabbath, my brother said to Papa, if the virtuous only can attain this state of felicity, what will become of the wicked, which we know constitute the great bulk of society in every age, and in every country. The reply which he received gave us no satisfaction, and when our dear parent retired to rest, we began to search the Scriptures, which soon convinced us, that even the chief of sinners could be saved.—The subject of inquiry appeared to us no less important, than it was novel; it deeply interested our feelings, and we pursued it at our leisure during the week, with intense application, till at length we resolved to hear, what is denominated an orthodox style of preaching, if peradventure, we might gain some satisfactory information. As we had often heard you, and another friend speak in very high terms of the Rev. Mr. ——— we decided on hearing him, and I trust that the impression which his discourse made on our minds, will never be effaced. He has given to us, if I may use such an expression, the clue of discovery; and now we can perceive beauties in the sacred volume which lay concealed from our eye, and understand those passages which had ever appeared obscure and inexplicable. But I am not happy. I feel a depression on my spirits, which I cannot remove—a fearful foreboding of some approaching evil—and at times a dread which forces me to exclaim in the disconsolate language of one of the ancient Prophets, *Woe is me, for I am undone.*"

Miss Reynolds. "It gives me pleasure, my dear Eliza. to hear such sentiments fall from your lips. God is dealing graciously with you. He wounds to heal. He

has convinced you of the evil of sin, and unveiled before you that abyss of danger, to which you were exposed, to prepare you for the manifestations of his favour,—beaming on you through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Miss Macfarlin. “But I fear that the Saviour will not look on me, with an eye of pity, as I have so often insulted him by denying his divinity, and the efficacy of his death as an expiation for human guilt. I am now astonished how I could reject doctrines which are so plainly revealed in the Scripture; and sometimes the guilt of my conduct appears so great, that I am more disposed to despair of mercy, than to encourage hope.”

Miss Reynolds. “If you *persisted* in denying his divinity, and rejecting the atonement which he has made for sin, you might despair of mercy; but if you admit these essential doctrines of the christian scheme of salvation, you may plead the promises of grace with confidence. The Redeemer will execute judgment in the last day upon ungodly sinners for all the hard speeches which they have spoken against him, if they die in a state of confirmed impenitence; but if they repent of their evil deeds, and hard speeches, he will, as a faithful and merciful High Priest, have compassion on them, and intercede for them, and bless them.”

Miss Macfarlin. “I now admit these doctrines as essential parts of the system of revealed truth; but yet I sometimes feel a recurrence of my former prejudices against them, which gives me unutterable distress. When pleading the atonement, as the foundation of my acceptance with God, I mistrust its efficacy; and when my heart begins to glow with warm affection for Him whom unseen, I love, it is suddenly chilled and suppressed by the influence of early opinions and associations. They have taken such a firm hold of my mind, that I cannot disengage myself from them; and I fear that they will always continue to perplex and depress me.”

Miss Reynolds. “Your remarks do not surprise me. It is no easy thing for the human mind to disengage itself from the influence of early opinions, even after they have been renounced; but the Lord has laid help upon one

who is mighty, and whose grace will be found sufficient for you. I would advise you to read the Scripture with close and devout attention; and some few treatises which discuss the controverted points in a judicious manner, and in a Christian spirit; but you ought to place the greatest dependence for deliverance from your early associations, on prayer. For the judgment may be convinced of the truth, by a logical process of investigation, even while the heart is unimpressed; God having reserved to himself the power of making the truth effectual to the salvation of them that believe, which power he exercises in answer to prayer. As the language of the Psalmist is very applicable to the present state of your mind, you will permit me to quote it. *Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day. Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies, and thy loving-kindnesses: for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness' sake, O Lord.*"

"There is one part of the system of revealed truth which has not yet engaged your attention, and as it is one of vital importance, I cannot avoid alluding to it. The part to which I now refer, is the agency of the Divine Spirit, by which we become strengthened in our inner man, to receive the truth in the love of it, and to discharge the high and sacred obligations which devolve on us. By your permission I will read to you an extract from a most valuable publication* which I have just received.

"As we are indebted to the Spirit for the first formation of the divine life, so it is He who alone can maintain it, and render it strong and vigorous. It is his office to actuate the habits of grace where they are already planted; to hold our souls in life, and to 'strengthen us, that we may walk up and down in the name of the Lord.' It is his office to present the mysteries of salvation; the truths which relate to the mediation of Christ and the riches of his grace, in so

* *Vide a Treatise on the Work of the Holy Spirit, by the celebrated Robert Hall of Leicester.*

penetrating and transforming a manner, as to render them vital, operating principles, the food and the solace of our spirits. Without his agency, however intrinsically excellent, they will be to us mere dead speculation, an inert mass: it is only when they are animated by his breath, that they become spirit and life."

"It is his office to afford that anointing by which we may know all things; by a light which is not merely directive to the understanding, but which so shines upon the heart, as to give a relish of the sweetness of divine truth, and effectually produce a compliance with its dictates. It belongs to him 'to seal us to the day of redemption,' to put that mark and character upon us, which distinguishes the children of God, as well as to afford a foretaste, as an earnest of the future inheritance. 'And hereby,' saith an apostle, 'we know that we are of God, by the Spirit which he hath given us.' It is his office to subdue the corruption of our nature, not by leaving us inactive spectators of the combat, but by engaging us to a determined resistance to every sinful propensity, by teaching our hands to war, and our fingers to fight, so that the victory shall be ours, and the praise his. To help the infirmities of saints, who know not what to pray for as they ought, by making intercession for them 'with groanings which cannot be uttered,' is an important branch of his office. He kindles their desires; gives them a glimpse of the fulness of God, that all-comprehending good; and by exciting a relish of the beauties of holiness, and the ineffable pleasure which springs from nearness to God, disposes them to the fervent and effectual prayer which availeth much. In short, as Christ is the way to the Father, so it is equally certain, that the Spirit is the fountain of all the light and strength which enable us to walk in that way."

Miss Macfarlin and her brother proceeded in their inquiries after truth, till at length they renounced Unitarianism as an anti-scriptural system, no less derogatory to the honour of God than inapplicable to the moral condition of man—a system which flatters the pride of the human heart, but which makes no provision for the relief of a wounded conscience; and which by placing the hope of final blessedness on the attainment of

personal virtue, supersedes the necessity of the Saviour's death and mediation, which constitute the most prominent and essential part of the scheme of redemption. And having renounced this system, they embraced the orthodox faith; and under its moral influence, rose to a state of communion with God, of which they had previously formed no conception. They now felt it their duty to recede entirely from the ministry of Dr. ———, and become stated worshippers at ———; which occasioned some regret to their venerable father, but he disdained to offer any opposition. Having remained some few months in their new religious connection as hearers of the word; and occasionally as spectators, when the death of the Saviour was celebrated by his disciples, they requested permission to join in this most sacred part of public worship; and after complying with the usual customs which prevail amongst dissenting churches, they were admitted.

As some of my readers may be ignorant of the forms which are generally observed by the Dissenters before they receive any into communion, it may not be unacceptable, if I very briefly state them. They do not admit persons indiscriminately to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, but require from the candidate a confession of his faith, and a moral deportment which corresponds with it. Hence they reject the sceptical and the immoral, as unfit to partake of the sacrament; but most willingly receive any one, without respect to rank, to talents, or to fortune, who can give *a reason of the hope that is in him*. The candidate usually applies to the pastor of the church, who, if satisfied with his conversation and general character, proposes him to the existing members, to be admitted into communion with them. This is done at a private meeting, which is held on some evening in the week which precedes the administration of the sacrament. Some Christians require the candidate to be present, and to answer any religious questions which any of the members may be inclined to propose; but as this is a practice which receives no sanction from the Scripture, and often occasions considerable embarrassment to a timid mind, it is now very generally discontinued, and nothing more is required than a brief statement from the lips of the

pastor, of the religious experience of the candidate, or a letter read, which he addresses to the church, which is read by the minister. If this statement, either from the pastor, or by the latter, is approved of, the candidate is admitted by the votes of the majority, and becomes entitled to all the privileges of Christian communion. These meetings are conducted with great solemnity, and are usually resorted to by the most pious, as eminently conducive to their spiritual improvement and felicity.

Mr. Macfarlin chose to state the outlines of his experience, by letter, and as the insertion of it, may vindicate the practice from some of the objections which a few wise and good men may urge against it, I will now give it to my readers.

To the Church of Christ assembling in ———,

“ CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

“ As I now solicit the honour and the privilege of being admitted into communion with you, I feel it my duty to comply with your usual custom, by giving you the reasons which have influenced my decision. I have been educated in the belief of Unitarian sentiments, but on a cool and dispassionate enquiry, I have been induced to renounce them, and embrace the orthodox faith. I now believe in the supreme divinity of Jesus Christ—in the personality and agency of the Divine Spirit—in the guilt and depravity of human nature—in the reality and efficacy of the atonement, and the certainty of a state of future blessedness. If saved, as I hope to be, I expect to be saved by grace, through faith; *For by grace are we saved through faith; and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* The change which has taken place in my religious opinions, and in the taste and disposition of my mind, I gratefully ascribe to the renovating influence of a supernatural power; and feel too deeply impressed by a sense of my obligation to the God of all grace, not to

admire the interrogations of the Apostle, "*Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*"

"I do not profess to be a perfect man; *but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* My reasons for wishing to become a member with you are, first, I approve of your mode of discipline, and I think it is my duty, as well as my privilege, to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as I am depending on the efficacy of his death for salvation. Aware of my own infirmities, and of the temptations by which I am surrounded, I would most earnestly solicit a remembrance in your prayers, that I may be kept from the corruptions of the world, and at last be presented faultless before the presence of the Divine glory, with exceeding joy.

"Yours, &c. J. M."

They were received into communion amongst their Christian brethren, with the utmost degree of cordiality and affection, and are still living the faithful witnesses of the truth as it is in Jesus. They had many virtues adorning their character, when they were called Unitarians; but now they carry their virtue to a higher pitch, by deriving the motives of its cultivation and display, from the authority of God, rather than the praise of man; and while they feel it to be their duty still to add to their *virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity*: they are so conscious of their defects, that they expect eternal life, not as a reward for their virtue, but as a sovereign and unmerited favour.

[No. 66.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

ON CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

PART IV.



“At nine o'clock every night a bell-man goes through the whole settlement; this is the signal for all persons to retire to their houses. A watch, consisting of a few persons, then sits; and continue to perambulate the place all night, every hour crying, ‘All’s well.’”

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1824.

ON CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

PART IV.

"It is so clearly the work of God, and not of man, that we almost forget that we have at all been employed in it."

Father Morsveld, Missionary.

"To Mr. Gordon.

MY DEAR SIR,

"In a recent conversation with you, on the subject of Christian Missions, you asserted, that 'the Missionaries were so captivated with the beauties of the unseen world, and so anxious to prepare the people for the possession of them, that they paid very little, if any attention to their present improvement; but left them in the same antisocial, uncivilized, and barbarous condition in which they found them.' On a supposition, that man is born to *live for ever*, and that Christianity discloses the only way in which we can attain to a state of endless felicity, you will not, I am conscious, condemn the Missionary, who attempts to fit the untutored heathen for such a high and sacred destiny. But I readily confess, that he ought not, while aiming at the accomplishment of the ulterior design of his labours, to neglect the cultivation of their mind in the principles of general science, or the amelioration of their domestic and social condition as members of society. But, Sir, you must be aware, that the wisest, and the best—the most prudent, and the most resolute, have to contend with difficulties of no ordinary magnitude. To change the habits of an entire people—to induce the indolent to become industrious—to persuade the roving to settle within confined districts—to establish fixed laws amongst barbarous tribes—and to teach the ignorant and uncultivated to form a proper estimate of the value of the arts and sciences, in the promotion of domestic and social happiness,—requires much patient labour; and a long space of time must necessarily elapse before any great progress can be made: and though you may imagine, in common with many others, that it never can be accomplished by the agency of our Missionaries, yet from the following documents which I have taken the liberty to send you, you will candidly acknowledge that you have

been mistaken. The first extract I have taken from the travels of Barrow, who visited Africa when the Missionary settlements were in the infancy of their establishment; and the other is from a very recent report we have received from a deputation, which was sent from the Parent Society to investigate the present state of the Missions in the South Seas. After you have read these documents, though you may still retain all your original objections against the necessity of Christian Missions to the heathen, to prepare them for a better world, I have no doubt you will admit their utility to promote their moral and civil improvement in this, and, as a benevolent man, will not only cease to inveigh against them, but will co-operate in their support.

“Proceeding up the valley, we halted at a place called Bavian’s Kloof, (now called Gnadenhal,) where there is a small establishment of Moravian Missionaries. These people have been several years in this colony, for the express purpose of instructing the Hottentots in the doctrines of Christianity; and the number of their proselytes have increased of late to such a degree, that they have found it necessary to send to Europe for more teachers of the Gospel.

“Early in the morning I was awakened by the noise of some of the finest voices I ever heard, and on looking out, saw a group of female Hottentots sitting on the ground. It was Sunday; and they had assembled thus early to chaunt the morning hymn. They were all neatly dressed, in printed cotton gowns. A sight so very different from what we had hitherto been in the habit of observing, with regard to this unhappy class of beings, could not fail of being grateful; and, at the same time, it excited a greater degree of curiosity as to the nature of the establishment. The good fathers, who were three in number, were well disposed to satisfy every question put to them. They were men of the middle age—plain, and decent in their dress—cleanly in their persons—of modest manners—meek, and humble in their deportment; but intelligent, and lively in their conversation—zealous in the cause of their Mission, but free from bigotry, or enthusiasm. Every thing about the place partook of that neatness and simplicity, which were the strongest features in the outline of their cha-

racter. The church they had constructed was a plain, neat building; their mill for grinding corn was superior to any in the colony; their garden was in high order, and produced abundance of vegetables for the use of the table. Almost every thing that had been done was by the labour of their own hands. Agreeably to the rules of that society of which they were members, each had learned some useful profession. One was well skilled in every branch of smith's work—the second was a shoe-maker—and the third a tailor.

“These Missionaries have succeeded in bringing together into one society more than 600 Hottentots; and their numbers are daily increasing.* These live in small huts dispersed over the valley, to each of which was a patch of ground for raising vegetables. Those who had first joined the society had the choicest situations, at the upper end of the valley, and their houses and gardens were very comfortable;—numbers of the poor in England not so good, and few better. Such of the Hottentots as choose to learn their respective trades, are paid for their labour as soon as they can earn wages. Some hire themselves out, by the week, month, or year, to the neighbouring peasantry—others make mats and brooms for sale—some breed poultry—and others find means to subsist by their cattle, sheep, and horses.

“On Sunday they all regularly attend the performance of divine service; and it is astonishing how ambitious they are to appear at church in neat and clean attire. Of the 300 that composed the congregation, about half were dressed in coarse printed cottons, and the other half in sheep-skin dresses: and it appeared, on inquiry, that the *former* were the *first* that had been brought within the pale of the church;—a proof that their circumstances, at least, had suffered nothing from their change of life. Persuasion and example had convinced them, that cleanliness in their persons not only added much to the comforts of life, but was one of the greatest preservatives of health; and that the little trifle of money they had to spare, was much better applied in procuring decent covering for the body, than in the purchase of spirits and tobacco.

* The village consists, at present, of 256 cottages and huts, containing 1276 inhabitants See Latrobe's Journey to South Africa, Chap. IV. 166

“ ‘The deportment of the Hottentot congregation during divine service was truly devout. The discourse delivered by one of the fathers, was short, but replete with good sense, pathetic, and well suited to the occasion: tears flowed abundantly from the eyes of those to whom it was particularly addressed.’

“ Such is the testimony which a traveller, unconnected with any of our Missionary Societies, bears to the utility of Christian Missions, in promoting the civilization, and temporal happiness of an ignorant and barbarous people; and the station from whence he took his descriptive scenes, more than a quarter of a century ago, has progressively advanced in improvement, and at this time presents an argument in favour of the Missionary cause, which, I have no doubt, will make, not only a strong, but a successful appeal to your benevolence.

“ ‘A REPORT OF THE STATE OF CIVILIZATION, MORALS, AND RELIGION, IN THE ISLAND OF RAIATEA, BY THE DEPUTATION, ADDRESSED TO THE DIRECTORS OF THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

“ ‘In every part of this beautiful island there are indications of a far more extensive population than it now contains, which has been reduced to its present state by the same devastating system of infanticide, war, murder, human sacrifices, &c. as prevailed in the other islands. The present population is nearly 1300. When the Missionaries came to reside here, in 1818, the people were living principally at five or six different places around the island; and in some cases from fifty to a hundred persons, or even more, in one large house, from fear of what they call *Tia Papan*, or ghosts, or other reasons; but when the Missionaries settled among them, they fixed upon the present well-chosen situation for a settlement, and since that time all the people have taken up their residence at this place, which is called *Vaoaara*, but denominated by the Missionaries the *City of David*. When we made a tour round the island, we found but one single family residing at any other place. At *Vaoaara* they have nearly all built themselves neat, plastered cottages, in the form and appearance of English cottages, which extend along the shore nearly two miles, taking in two rich and extensive

vallies. A wide *patu*, or stone pier, has been built from the beach into the sea, about three hundred feet in length, as a landing place, at the extremity of which is good anchorage for ships of any tonnage, where they can lie in great safety. Another extensive *patu* has been built, as the site of the king's house. A third *patu* is now in hand; at the extremity of which is a market-house, where goods are offered for sale when ships come into the harbour. Besides these *patus*, there are two long causeways across arms of the sea, one of which is two hundred and seventy feet in length, and three bridges; the whole stone-work of one of them is one hundred and eighty feet: these bridges are built over streams; one of them has two wooden arches.

“The government of this island is monarchical, and vests in the person of Tomatoa,—an amiable, intelligent, and pious man, about sixty years of age, six feet four in height, and large in proportion. Trial by jury has been instituted, and acted upon. There is a court-house, in which all trials are held, and the king generally presides in person, though his brother, whose name is Pahi, is chief judge, and conducts all legal proceedings. When any cause is to be tried, a bell-man is sent round the settlement, to give notice that all may attend who wish. All trials are therefore public, and it is with the jury to say guilty, or not guilty. If guilty, the law of the case is read, and the punishment inflicted. All trials are conducted with great solemnity. Law proceedings are never protracted. When the criminal is detected, he is tied to a tree till the court can be summoned, when he is brought to justice, and in two or three hours the whole affair is settled;—and if found guilty, the punishment is inflicted. Energy, as well as dispatch, characterize the law proceedings here.

“This island is divided into eight grand divisions; and though all the people reside in one place, those who come from the same district generally build their houses near to each other, and the same distinction is observed in the settlement as was observed while they resided upon their lands: each division has its petty judges, and other officers, who have their own people under their immediate care. The civil polity is remarkably simple, but effective, and all the chiefs and landed pro-

prietors are connected with it; the king never doing any thing without consulting them. In all cases of importance the Missionaries are consulted; and in such cases one or both of them are present during the trial, to give advice when asked by the king or chiefs.

“Tamatoa was both *deified* and made a king, not only by the inhabitants of this island, but by the suffrages of the kings, chiefs, and people of all the surrounding islands, to a great extent, under the reign of idolatry: this was done by such ceremonies, and so detestable, that they cannot be named. He was afterwards conquered by Tapoa, a fierce chief from Borabora, and his land taken from him, though he was still allowed to hold the reins of government. From ages unknown the king of this island was regarded as supreme by all the islands around; whose kings, with all their civil officers, received their authority from him, and sent him tribute from time to time, in the form of presents. This was continued till the Gospel was received by them, after which they gradually, one after another, became independent. About the same time Tapoa died, and Tamatoa was restored to his authority.

“This island was not only the source of all *political authority* to the surrounding islands, but also of their idolatrous religion. The king was, in fact, though not in name, the chief priest, and the source of all power; and the civil and idolatrous polity were so singularly combined, with a view to reciprocal support, that the destruction of the system of idolatry was next to a miracle. Human sacrifices were brought from all the other islands, and offered to Oro, the god of war, at Opoa,—a place in this island which was the centre and source of all the South Sea idolatry, and which we have visited with no common interest. Here the now pious and amiable Tamatoa was actually prayed to as a deity, the recollection of which now often fills his heart with the keenest remorse. This system of idolatry we should have thought invincible; but the Gospel has utterly destroyed it. Not a vestige of it now exists. We search for it, but find it not. This triumph of the cross must be regarded as one of the most signal, if not the most signal ever achieved since the world began. Glory to God in the highest. It is truly marvellous in our eyes.

“Downfall of Idolatry, and Introduction of Christianity.

“This cruel system, with all its attendant evils, continued in full operation till the year 1816, when this island abandoned its idols, and embraced the Gospel. The following circumstances led to this memorable event. There was a ship which had got upon the reef at Eimeo, and was in danger of being wrecked: Pomare, who happened to be at that island at the time, and also Mr. Wilson, the Missionary, both went on board to assist in getting the vessel off, in which they succeeded. A violent storm came on immediately the ship was freed from the reef, which drove her down to this island, where Pomare and Mr. Wilson were obliged to remain some time, unable to return to Tahiti. Mr. W. embraced the favourable opportunity offered him of preaching the Gospel to the natives, while Pomare employed his influence to induce the people to abandon their idols, and embrace the truth. Success attended their united efforts, and the king, with his chiefs and people, avowed themselves Christians.

“But though the natives of this island from this time avowed themselves the disciples of Jesus Christ, they knew little more of the Gospel than its name. They desisted from offering human sacrifices, idolatrous worship, infanticide, and some other horrid practices—built places of Christian worship—allowed the women to eat with the men, &c.; yet they lived in the indulgence of every evil desire. They were, to a great extent, utterly ignorant of the doctrines and obligations of their new religion, till a gracious Providence directed to settle among them their present ministers, the Rev. Messrs. Threlkeld and Williams, who settled here in 1818. When these two pious and excellent Missionaries, with their valuable wives, came here, they found the whole land a moral desert, and the people the slaves of divers lusts and pleasures.

“Commencement and Progress of Civilization.

“After their arrival, the first thing to be done was, the selection of a suitable place for a settlement. The king, and many of the chiefs were desirous of remaining at Opoa, but strong reasons induced the Missionaries to prefer their present station. They found the place a

complete wilderness, entirely overgrown with trees and bushes; but they saw its capabilities, and, with the assistance of the people, they soon erected houses, which are very comfortable, of a good size, and surrounded by large gardens. They are far superior to hundreds of parsonage-houses in England. Cocoa-nut trees, and various flowering shrubs grow in the front garden, while in those behind the houses are bread-fruit trees, and a variety of good table vegetables. The whole are enclosed by neat bamboo fences. They are situated near to each other, at a short distance from the beach, and in the centre of the settlement.

“They next began to erect a place of worship, of sufficient magnitude to accommodate the whole population of the island. It is one hundred and fifty-six feet in length, by forty-four feet in width, to which is attached, under the same roof, a court-house, which is separated from the chapel by a partition. The length of the whole building is one hundred and ninety-one feet. The whole is comfortably floored with plank, and well seated. The walls are wattled and plastered, and neatly coloured in the inside, and have an air of respectability. It was opened in the year 1819. All the people, with the exception of one family, have built themselves houses near the Missionaries; and though they visit their lands during the week, to keep them in a state of cultivation, and bring home their food, yet they return on Fridays, dress their food on Saturdays, and prepare for the duties of the Sabbath.

“Around the settlement, in both the vallies, the ground is inclosed, to a great extent, by bamboo fences. In these inclosures tobacco and sugar-cane are planted. Both tobacco and sugar the people have lately learnt to prepare for the market. The specimens which we have seen of both were of the best quality, and we conceive cannot be exceeded by similar productions in any country. Both grow here in great luxuriance. The people have also learnt to make salt from sea water, by boiling it in large iron pans: what we have seen is equal to the best English salt. Here is a sugar-mill, and also a smithy; and some of the natives do common jobs, such as making hinges, &c., very well. Most of the *men can work at carpentry*; and we have seen some

chairs, and other articles made by them, which have greatly surprised us. At a public feast, every man who could, brought a sofa, for the accommodation of himself and family; and we saw not fewer than two hundred and fifty exhibited on this occasion, and about half as many tables; and many of both were well made. The exhibition was as pleasing as it was novel; and the numerous speeches which were made by the natives on that interesting occasion did both their heads and hearts unspeakable credit. They begin to imitate the Missionaries in their mode of living, and are anxious to possess every article of furniture which is necessary to enable them to live in the English style. They are making rapid progress in the various arts of civilized life.

“While the numerous white cottages wear an air of comfort and happiness, the clothing of the people is decent and becoming. Many of the men and women wear European clothing, especially on the Sabbath, while the others are well clad in the cloth and tibutas of their own making. All the men have good hats, and the women and girls decent bonnets, made from the bark of the purau-tree; and seldom are either sex seen without these articles, which they make with great neatness.

“*Moral and Religious Improvement of the Natives.*

“But however much there is here to commend in the progress of the arts of civilized life,—and great things indeed have been done, by the exertions of the Missionaries and their wives, in this respect,—yet the moral and religious change which has been effected is more astonishing. This island being the principal seat of idolatry, it is reasonable to suppose that the people would be degraded to the lowest pitch of wickedness, which was the fact. In examining the numberless ruined *maraes*, or heathen temples at Opoa, we could hardly realize the idea, that six or seven years ago they were all in use. In looking over this large congregation, and seeing so many conducting themselves with the greatest propriety, we often said, can these be the people who participated in the horrid scenes which we have heard described?

“Many of the men and women, and not a few of the children, can read fluently, and with accuracy.

these portions of the Sacred Scriptures which have been translated; many can write, and several cipher: and such is the system of improvement that is now in operation, that not a single child, or grown person, can remain in this island unable to read.

“A detail of the religious advantages of these people will account for their progress in knowledge, which is very considerable, and illustrate the conduct and exertions of the Missionaries; who unite in themselves the qualifications that are necessary as teachers of religion, and promoters of the arts of civilized life.

“Every Lord’s day begins with a public prayer-meeting at sun-rise, which is conducted by the natives. The whole congregation attend. At nine o’clock is public worship again, when one of the Missionaries preaches. After this the Missionaries have an English service at their own houses, for the benefit of their own families. At one o’clock the people assemble again in the chapel, to be catechised on the subject of the morning’s sermon, while the children in the school-house are catechised in those compendiums of Gospel doctrines which have been drawn up for them. At four o’clock in the afternoon is public worship again, when the other Missionary preaches. In the evening most of the people meet at their own houses, in classes of twenty or thirty persons each, for prayer, and religious conversation. On Monday evenings is general conversation at the chapel, when the Missionaries answer any questions that may be proposed to them, on all subjects, secular or religious. On Tuesday evenings the people are catechised on the subject of the Lord’s-day afternoon sermon, in classes of about thirty persons each, into which all the baptized adults are divided, while all the rest are allowed to attend; after which any of the men are allowed to deliver exhortations. Six or seven generally speak on these occasions, and generally with great zeal and propriety, and do not fail to rebuke each other for any inconsistency which they may have seen, while they exhort each other to diligence and perseverance in the ways of God. On Wednesday evening is a public lecture. Thursday evenings Mrs. Threlkeld meets a select society of women, for religious conversation and prayer. On Friday evening is a service and a lecture.

delivered to those who have been baptized: after the address the natives deliver exhortations, as on Tuesday evenings. Saturdays are always wholly appropriated to the preparing of food for the Lord's-day. The children's school is under the superintendence of Mrs. Threlkeld, while Mr. Williams meets a large class of adults every morning at the chapel, to catechise them on those portions of the Scriptures which have been translated. We have often been surprised and delighted at the intelligence and religious knowledge which the people discover on these and other occasions. In point of intellect we consider the Tahitians equal to the English, and in religious knowledge inferior to few.

"All the people in the island, excepting about two hundred, have been baptized. When baptized, they then become candidates for the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. About two months previous to our arrival at this station, a few of the baptized made application to the Missionaries to be formed into a Christian church. Their request was complied with, and they were formed into a church, deacons were appointed, and the Lord's Supper was administered.

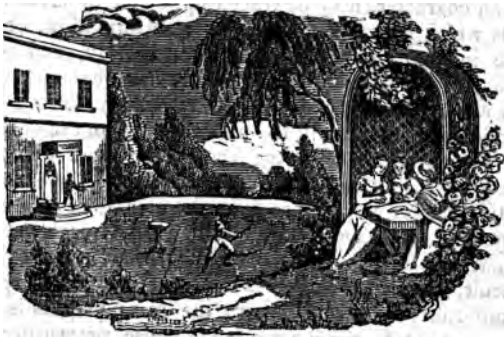
"It happens in this, as in all the other islands, that there are some loose and profligate characters, who disapprove of the purity of Christianity, though they assent to its doctrines. There is not a family in this island that has not family-prayer morning and evening. At nine o'clock every night a bell-man goes through the whole settlement; this is the signal for all persons to retire to their houses. A watch, consisting of a few persons, then sits, and continue to perambulate the place all night, every hour crying, "All's well."

"It has afforded us great pleasure to witness the affection and confidence in which the Missionaries and their pious wives are held. Their opinions are regarded as oracles. They are consulted on all occasions, and on all subjects. They are men of good talents, sound judgments, and ardent piety. The happiness of the people in both worlds, is the object which they keep in view; and the improved condition of the settlement is such as to afford the most convincing proof, that the *preaching of the Gospel is the most direct and efficient means of promoting both religion and civilization.*"

[No. 67.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

ON THE DIFFERENT PROPENSITIES AMONGST
THE CHILDREN OF THE SAME FAMILY.



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“It is so.”

“What woman?”

“The mantua-maker! Here are the fetters of my captivity, (exhibiting the undischarged bills,) which I will now go and break asunder, and never more will I consent to wear them.”

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ON THE DIFFERENT PROPENSITIES AMONGST THE CHILDREN OF THE SAME FAMILY.

"Young women who accustom themselves to be lavish in matters of personal decoration, easily proceed to think, that so long as they restrain their expensiveness within the limits of the resources supplied by their parents and friends, they are not chargeable with blame on the subject. If they pay their bills punctually, who is entitled to find fault?" *Gisborne.*

It has often been a subject of speculation amongst us, whether the varieties which are apparent in the human character, may be traced up to the different methods which have been employed in its formation, or to some inherent peculiarity in the constitution, and propensity of the mind. That education and example will have a material influence over it, no one can doubt; but they do not operate with the uniformity of an established law of nature, as we have known the most opposite characters rising out of the same family. To account for this, unless we suppose that there is some inherent propensity in human nature, which gives to each person an individuality of original character, would be extremely difficult, if not impossible; as we should naturally expect a uniformity of result, where the same process is observed, unless there be some latent cause preventing it. Hence some of the most improved systems of education which prevail amongst us, make provision for a difference in the style of instruction, and in the mode of treatment, to accord with the natural temper, and inclination of the pupils; supposing, that by such a judicious arrangement, their moral and intellectual improvement may be more effectually secured.

But how often does even this method fail of accomplishing its intended effect; as we see the children of a large family presenting a diversity in their taste—their disposition—their habits—no less striking than they could have done, if no wisdom or discretion had been employed in their cultivation. Meekness and irritability—a condescending amiability, and a proud hauteur—a placidness and tenderness of disposition, and a violence and resentment of spirit—a love of display, and a native

modesty which withdraws from public notice—a passion for some individual pursuit, and a restlessness which no object can fix, are the moral lights and shadows, which often fall on the members of the same family, giving that variety of hue and tinge, which bears some analogy to the inferior productions of nature.

Mr. and Mrs. Holmes laid down a few maxims for the government of their conduct, from which they never swerved, which were to attach their children to their home, to encourage them to place the utmost degree of confidence in their parents, and to cultivate the purest affection for each other. By the adoption of these maxims, they displayed their good sense, and parental regard; as it is uniformly found, that when a child outgrows his love for sacred home, he has lost the sheet anchor of his safety; that if he have not free and unbarred access to his parents, he will conceal from them the secret purposes of his heart; and that if he feel no peculiar interest in the society and welfare of the other juvenile branches of the family, he will cherish a jealous and envious disposition, not more destructive of their domestic happiness than his own.

They had often, when speaking of the excellencies which so finely budded on the opening character of some of the children, expressed their regret, over the unpromising appearances of others; yet indulged the hope that they would outgrow their “flaws unseemly,” and when arrived at the maturity of judgment, would display not only the strength of reason, but the beauty of virtue. As they advanced from childhood to youth, and from youth to riper years, they gradually developed the peculiarities of their tempers and dispositions, which were so dissimilar, that no uniform mode of discipline could be adopted, with any chance of proving beneficial. As Mr. Holmes had so much of his time occupied in his commercial affairs, while his children were young, the chief responsibility of their education devolved on their mother, who feeling anxious to discharge the trust reposed in her, availed herself of all the information which she could acquire. The following paragraph which she met with in a favourite author, gave her an insight into the art of a judicious management. It inspired her with a good hope, respecting those of her

family, who appeared the most unpromising, because the most untractable and wayward. "A discriminating teacher will appreciate the individual character of each pupil, in order to appropriate her management. We must strengthen the feeble, while we repel the bold. We cannot educate by a *receipt*: for after studying the best rules, and after digesting them into the best system, much must depend on contingent circumstances; for that which is good may be inapplicable. The cultivator of the human mind must, like the gardener, study diversities of soil, or he may plant diligently, and water faithfully with little fruit. The skilful labourer knows that, even when the surface is not particularly promising, there is often a rough, strong ground, which will amply repay the trouble of breaking it up; yet we are often most taken with a soft surface, though it conceal a shallow depth, because it promises present reward and little trouble. But strong and pertinacious tempers, of which perhaps obstinacy is the leading vice, under skilful management often turn out steady and sterling characters; while from softer clay a firm and vigorous virtue is but seldom produced. Pertinacity is often principle, which wants nothing but to be led to its true object; while the uniformly yielding, and universally accommodating spirit, is not seldom the result of a feeble tone of morals, of a temper eager for praise, and acting for reward."

It is often remarked, that children are men and women in miniature, and it must be admitted that as they grow up to their full stature, they in general throw out in more visible expression, the excellencies and defects of their juvenile character; but when they are submitted to the operation of extraordinary causes, they sometimes undergo an entire transmutation, and become new creatures. The most hopeless turn out the most valuable—those who have inflicted the most pungent sorrow, ultimately become the source of the purest joy; while the *promising* have faded in the spring-time vigour of their virtue, and those who have been endowed with the most commanding talents, have brought down the grey hairs of parental anxiety with sorrow to the grave.

The eldest sons of this family, who succeeded to the business when the father retired, were brought up under

the most rigid system of economy; and though there were some prominent shades of distinction in their character, yet they had been so intimately blended together from the earliest days of childhood, that they were well qualified to continue in closest union. The youngest son, who was the child of their declining days, and who was devoted to the medical profession, possessed more adroitness and vivacity, than either of his brothers, and surpassed them in the shrewdness of his mind; but either from the laxity of parental controul over him, or the greater perversity of his disposition, or the peculiar connections which his pursuits in life led him to form, he disappointed those high expectations which he had raised, and eventually became the source of domestic grief. He was passionately attached to his sister Emma, whom he most nearly resembled, not only in person, but in disposition; and having imbibed sceptical notions on religious subjects, soon after he commenced his professional studies, he infused them into her mind, which did her essential injury. While there was an unobtrusive modesty about Jane, which naturally induced her to retire from public notice, and a delicate softness in her manners, which operated as a spell on the feelings of her more intimate friends, Emma was fond of displaying her personal beauty, and the resources of her mind; and such was the disdain with which she treated the assumed inferiority of the female sex, that she was sometimes in danger of acting a part in a debate or discussion, which she could not support, but at the hazard of sacrificing delicacy at the shrine of vanity. The love of dress was a passion which took a very early possession of her mind, and which her parents very improperly cherished, by allowing her to decorate her person just as her fancy dictated, not conceiving that by such a compliance she would sustain any moral injury. But they lived to see and deplore their error.

"It is a just remark," says an excellent writer, "that objects in their own nature innocent, and entitled to notice may become the sources of *disadvantage*, and of *guilt*, when, being raised from the rank of trifles to ideal importance, they occupy a share of attention which they do not deserve; and when they are pursued with an *immoderate* ardour, which at once indisposes the

women are sometimes plunged by the contrary practice. The lavish indulgence in which they have learned to seek for happiness, becoming, in their estimation, essential to their comfort, is able to bias their conduct in every important step. Hence in forming matrimonial connections, it exercises perhaps a secret, but a very powerful influence. The prospect of wealth and magnificence, of the continuance and of the increase of pleasures supposed to flow from the pomp of dress and equipage, from sumptuous mansions, shewy furniture, and numerous attendants, dazzles the judgment; imposes on the affections; conceals many defects in moral character, and compensates for others. It frequently proves the decisive circumstance which leads the deluded victim to the altar, there to consign herself to splendid misery for life.

"There are yet other consequences which attend an immoderate passion for the embellishments of dress. When the mind is fixed upon objects which derive their chief value from the food which they administer to vanity and the love of admiration; the aversion, which almost every individual of either sex is prone to feel towards a rival, is particularly called forth. And when objects attainable so easily as exterior ornaments occupy the heart, there will be rivals without number. Hence it is not very unusual to see neighbouring young women engaged in a constant state of petty warfare with each other. To vie in ostentatiousness, in costliness or in elegance of apparel; to be distinguished by novel inventions in the science of decoration; to gain the earliest intelligence respecting changes of fashion in the metropolis; to detect, in the attire of a luckless competitor, traces of a mode which for six weeks has been obsolete in high life; these frequently are the points of excellence to which the force of female genius is directed. In the mean time, while the mask of friendship is worn on the countenance, and the language of regard dwells on the tongue, indifference, disgust, and envy, are gradually taking possession of the breast; until, at length, the unworthy contest, prolonged for years under confirmed habits of dissimulation, by which none of the parties are deceived, terminates in the violence of an open rupture.

"The Scriptures have spoken too plainly and too strongly respecting solicitude about dress, to permit me to quit the subject without a special reference to their authority. Our Saviour, in one of his most solemn discourses, warns his followers against anxiety 'where-withal they should be clothed,' in a manner particularly emphatical, by classing that anxiety with the despicable pursuits of those who are studious 'what they shall eat, and what they shall drink;' and by pronouncing all such cares to be among the characteristic features, by which the heathens were distinguished and disgraced. It ought to be observed, that these admonitions of Christ respect men no less than women. St. Paul in the following passage speaks pointedly concerning female dress: 'I will, in like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shame-facedness and sobriety: not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but, which becometh women professing godliness, with good works.' In another passage, which remains to be produced from the New Testament, St. Peter, also speaks expressly of the female sex: and primarily of married women, but in terms applicable with equal propriety to the single: 'Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair and of wearing of gold, and of putting on of apparel. But let it be the hidden man of the heart,' (the inward frame and disposition of the mind,) 'in that which is not corruptible; even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.' It would be too much to assert, on the one hand, that it was the intention of either of the Apostles, in giving these directions, to proscribe the use of the particular kinds of personal ornament which he specifies; but, on the other hand, it was unquestionably the design of both, to proscribe whatever may justly be styled solicitude respecting any kind of personal decoration; and to censure those who, instead of resting their claim to approbation solely on the tempers of the soul, in any degree should ambitiously seek to be noticed and praised for exterior embellishments, as deviating precisely in that degree from the simplicity and the purity of the *Christian character*."

When the young ladies arrived at a certain age, they were allowed a stated income, to meet their current expenditure; beside occasional presents. One custom prevailed in this family, which the writer hopes will never become extinct amongst us, as it belongs so appropriately to the *English* character. The *birthdays* were celebrated, with a becoming distinction, especially those of the parents, which were hailed with great delight. After the cloth was removed, and the children had drank the health and long life of their dear and honoured father, he invariably distributed his gifts among them, which bore the appellation of *birthday presents*. The party met as usual—the usual health was drank—and the same degree of pleasure beamed from every countenance, when Mr. Holmes said, “I shall depart this year, from my usual custom, and beg your acceptance of the note, which you will find enclosed in the envelope, bearing your respective name.

In the evening, as the young ladies were taking their walk, their conversation turned on the unexpected liberality of their father, when Miss Emma asked her sisters what they intended to purchase.

“I intend,” said *Miss Jane*, “to purchase my freedom.”

“Your freedom, my dear,” said the facetious *Emma*, “I did not know that you were in bondage to any man; but if you are, surely you do not think of paying for your *enslaved* liberty.”

“I am not,” replied *Jane*, “in bondage to any man.”

“No! to whom then?”

“To woman-kind!!”

“Woman! what, woman enslave her own sex? No! cannot be!!”

“It is so.”

“What woman?”

“The mantua-maker! Here are the fetters of my captivity, (exhibiting the undischarged bills) which I will now go and break asunder, and never more will I consent to wear them.”

“You are to be commended my dear,” said *Miss Holmes*, “and I hope Emma will follow your example, for with the liberal allowance, and the presents we receive, we ought to have something to spare to the

claims of religion, and benevolence, rather than have unpaid bills disgracing the drawers of our toilet."

"Indeed," *Miss Emma* replied, "I think papa gives quite enough away, to purchase our redemption from the taxes of charity. When I am settled in life, it is my intention to appropriate a regular sum to charitable purposes, but now I cannot afford it. We must be just before we are generous."

"On that maxim I shall act," said *Jane*, "I will discharge my debts as an act of justice; and then I shall have it in my power to be generous to the poor and needy."

"I have no doubt," *Miss Holmes* replied, "but you are sincere in your proposed intentions respecting your future charities; but to quote a parody which I once heard an esteemed friend make, when addressing some who were supposed to have made a similar resolve;"

"If you tarry till you're richer
You will never give at all!"

"You must know, my dear, if you reflect on the subject, that we are now forming our habits for life—growing up into that moral stature which we shall ere long attain—and giving to our principles and propensities their fixed and changeless tendency; and is it not, of great importance, that we should begin to cultivate those virtues which we wish to blossom and bear fruit on our future reputation?"

"But, to keep to your figure, if the virtue of charity do not shoot upon our character while we reside under the shade of parental influence, when we are removed to another soil, it may grow luxuriantly, especially if we employ a little artificial heat."

"But artificial heat does not give such a delicate tinge, nor does it impart such a fine flavour to a plant, as it is known to possess, when it grows spontaneously under the influence of unforced nature."

"It may be so, but there is no rule without an exception: but your habits and mine are so dissimilar, and therefore you cannot expect, that I can follow your example."

"Then follow the example of *Jane*, and you will feel more at ease."

"Indeed, I am at ease. They charge enough, for the few articles I purchase, to allow me to take a long credit."

"That is very true. They charge in proportion to the length of credit they give; and hence you pay such an exorbitant price for your attire. You impoverish yourself by the very method you employ in expending your money, and never have the satisfaction of being free from the pressing claims of dress-makers and milliners. You voluntarily deny yourself the noble gratification of relieving the necessities of others; for when an appeal is made to your feelings, you are obliged to resist it, if not resent it, because you have previously exhausted your resources."

"You reason excellently well, and I admit the force and accuracy of your reasoning; but I must purchase something with this present, as a compliment to the generosity which dictated it; yet I shall not forget your observations."

It is, in the more private occurrences of domestic life, that the peculiarity of the human character is unfolded; and events, trifling in themselves, become immensely important, in consequence of their becoming part of a continuous influence in its formation. The bestowment of a birthday present, was a fresh expression of paternal regard, but what different dispositions and tendencies did it call forth; and what a different moral effect did it produce.—Miss Holmes devoted one moiety of her present to the claims of charity and religion, and with part of the remainder, she purchased a silver snuff box, which she presented to her father with a few appropriate verses. Jane, who had been enticed into extravagance, by following the example of her sister, went and discharged her debts; while Emma, having seen a most beautiful shawl, ordered it to be sent to the Elms, but she was obliged to solicit an advance of her quarter's allowance, before she could pay for it.

[No. 68.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

ON AMUSEMENTS.

PART I.



"A challenge was given and accepted—they met—took their distance—when the signal was given they fired—one fell to rise no more; the other is still living to deplore in useless regrets, the catastrophe, by which he deprived himself of one of his most intimate associates—a wife of one of the best of husbands—and three children of a father who tenderly loved them."

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ON AMUSEMENTS.

PART I.

"Young women sometimes complain, and more frequently the complaint is made for them, that they have nothing to do. Yet few complaints are urged with less foundation. To prescribe to a young person of the female sex the precise occupations to which she should devote her time, is impossible. It would be to attempt to limit, by inapplicable rules, duties which must vary according to circumstances which cannot previously be ascertained. Differences in point of health, of intellect, of taste, and a thousand nameless particularities of family occurrences and local situation, claim, in each individual case, to be taken into the account."

Gisborne.

MISS ORME had accepted an invitation to spend a few weeks at the Elms, and being aware of the religious habits of the family, she made an effort to conform to them, with the most scrupulous exactness. When she played, she generally selected sacred music, as a compliment to the taste of her pious friends; and even *condescended* to accompany them to chapel, though she avowed her decided preference to the forms and ceremonies of the Church. She was naturally of a very pliable disposition, and had she been under a different course of moral discipline, she might have devoted her attention to the unseen realities of an eternal world; but being surrounded by the most splendid fascinations of gay life, and taught to regard the gratification of her taste as the chief end of her existence, she became one of the most zealous devotees that ever bowed down at the shrine of fashion. She possessed a mind that was capable of very great improvement; but the books she read, and the subjects on which she generally conversed, had a tendency to impair its strength, and to keep it from ranging in the field of useful knowledge. She was rather shrewd, and would sometimes make a reply, or give a turn to an observation with very considerable effect; but her force was soon exhausted, and she would fall back into a state of ennui unless the conversation related to the fashions or the amusements of the day, and then she would speak with great fluency and animation. She was so good-natured

in her disposition, that she would bear reproof with the utmost degree of mildness, but never thought of amending her ways; would acknowledge herself in an error, when it was pointed out to her, yet persisted in adopting it; and often confessed that she had no doubt but a religious life was more acceptable to our Maker, and yet as often expressed her astonishment that any young person could ever think of becoming religious.

As Mr. Holmes could not conscientiously suffer his daughters to attend any of the public amusements to which the higher, and the opulent, and some of the impoverished ranks of life, devote such a considerable portion of their time, he endeavoured to compensate for the loss of such enjoyments by making *their home the paradise of their bliss*; and by treating them with excursions into the country, where they might enjoy a change of air, and of scenery, and often of society, without running the risk of sustaining any moral injury. To gratify her friend, Miss Emma had persuaded her father to take them to Windsor, where they were to have spent one night, and to have returned the following day; but there had been so much rain in the night, and it continued to descend in such torrents, that they were obliged to postpone their visit, and consign themselves to a state of domiciliary confinement. This disappointment was borne with great cheerfulness by the Holmes's, but Miss Orme felt it to be a most irksome burden, and more than once during the day, said, "What a misfortune that providence should allow it to rain to-day, when I suppose he knew we were going to Windsor."

"Why, perhaps," said Mr. Holmes, "he has sent the rain to prevent a misfortune."

"Dear Sir, do you think he ever pays such attention to us?"

"Yes, most certainly. Our Saviour says, *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*"

"Then of course it is so, but it never struck me before."

As she was sauntering through the different suites of rooms leaning on the arm of Miss Emma, bitterly deploring the continued descent of the rain, which

precluded the hope of taking their projected excursion, she unconsciously broke in upon Miss Holmes, who was finishing a dress for a poor woman, who was daily expecting the birth of her firstborn.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Holmes, for this act of intrusion. We are sauntering away dull time."

"Walk in, and I will give you some employment."

"Indeed I am not fit for work. This is one of the dullest days of my life. I wish the rain was over and gone."

"Perhaps you would have no objection to read."

There were several books lying on the table which she carelessly examined and closed, when Emma said, "Here is one which you have not seen." She took it, read the title, *An Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex*. "A learned dissertation, I have no doubt, on woman. I wonder what he says. He has, I see, a chapter on the employment of time; shall I read that, Miss Holmes?"

"If you please."

"Time is a sacred trust consigned to us by the Creator of the universe. To use it well is a lesson, which duty and reason concur to suggest. The duration of the period to be confided to our management, though predetermined in the counsels of Omniscience, is undisclosed to the individual concerned, and is placed beyond the reach of calculation; that uncertainty respecting the future may operate as a continual and powerful admonition wisely to employ the present hour. Would you perceive the ingratitude and folly of squandering so precious a deposit? Reflect on the gracious purposes, for the accomplishment of which it is committed to you. Reflect how plainly incompatible a habit of squandering it is, with the frame of mind which is the fruit of Christianity. Reflect on the infinite importance which you will hereafter attach to time past, when the consequences flowing from the right or wrong use of it will be discerned and felt by you in their full extent."

Miss Orme. "This is too grave a subject for me. It will throw too dark a shade of melancholy over my mind, which is already oppressed beyond calm endurance by the horrid gloom of the weather. I am fond of reading, but I prefer the lighter productions of the press." She

closed the book, and was in the act of rising, when Miss Holmes said, "You will oblige me by reading another paragraph in that chapter which may prove advantageous to you, even though it may not exactly accord with your present taste."

"Certainly, if you wish it."

"To every woman whether single or married, the habit of regularly allotting to improving books a portion of each day, and, as far as may be practicable, at stated hours, cannot be too strongly recommended. I use the term *improving* in a large sense; as comprehending all writings which may contribute to her virtue, her usefulness, and her innocent satisfaction, to her happiness in this world and in the next. She who believes that she is to survive in another state of being through eternity, and is duly impressed by the awful conviction, will fix day by day her most serious thoughts on the inheritance to which she aspires. Where the treasure is, there will her heart be also. She will not be seduced from an habitual study of the Holy Scriptures, and of other works calculated to imprint on her bosom the comparatively small importance of the pains and pleasures of this period of existence; and to fill her with that knowledge, and inspire her with those views and dispositions, which may lead her to delight in the present service of her Maker, and enable her to rejoice in the contemplation of futurity. At other seasons let history, let biography, let poetry, or some of the various branches of elegant and profitable knowledge, pay their tribute of instruction and amusement. But let whatever she peruses in her most private hours be such as she needs not to be ashamed of reading aloud to those whose good opinion she is most anxious to deserve. Let her remember that there is an all seeing eye, which is ever fixed upon her, even in her closest retirement. Let her not indulge herself in the frequent perusal of writings, however interesting in their nature, however eminent in a literary point of view, which are likely to inflame pride, and to inspire false notions of generosity, of feeling, of spirit, or of any other quality deemed to contribute to excellence of character. Such unhappily are the effects to be apprehended from the works even of several of our distinguished writers, in prose and in verse.

And let her accustom herself regularly to bring the sentiments which she reads, and the conduct which is described in terms, more or less strong, of applause and recommendation, to the test of Christian principles. In proportion as this practice is pursued or neglected, reading will be profitable or pernicious."

"Too grave! too grave! I candidly confess, I prefer the ingenious novel or the bold romance to such very grave productions. I can feel an interest in them. You object to such compositions, I presume."

"Yes."

"But why, when they display so much ingenuity, and have such a good moral tendency?"

"I cannot reply to your present remark in more forcible language than the writer has done, whose book you hold in your hand, and if you will permit me I will read an extract."

"Of course, I cannot object."

"Works of this nature not unfrequently deserve the praise of ingenuity of plan and contrivance, of accurate and well supported discrimination of character, and of force and elegance of language. Some of them have professedly been composed with a design to favour the interests of morality. And among those which are deemed to have on the whole a moral tendency, a very few perhaps might be selected, which are not liable to the disgraceful charge of being occasionally contaminated by incidents and passions unfit to be represented to the reader. This charge, however, may so very generally be alledged with justice, that even of the novels which possess high and established reputation, by far the greater number is totally improper, in consequence of such admixture, to be perused by the eye of delicacy. Poor indeed are the services rendered to virtue by a writer, however he may boast that the object of his performance is to exhibit the vicious as infamous and unhappy, who, in tracing the progress of vice to infamy and unhappiness, introduces the readers to scenes and languages adapted to wear away the quick feelings of modesty, which form at once the ornament and safeguard of innocence; and like the bloom upon a plum, if once effaced, commonly disappear for ever. To indulge in a practice of reading novels is, in several

other particulars, liable to produce mischievous effects. Such compositions are to most people, extremely engaging. That story must be singularly barren, or wretchedly told, of which, having heard the beginning, we desire not to know the end. To the pleasure of learning the ultimate fortunes of the heroes and heroines of the tale, the novel commonly adds, in a greater or less degree, that which arises from animated description, from lively dialogue, or from interesting sentiment. Hence the perusal of one publication of this class leads, with much more frequency than is the case with respect to works of other kinds, (except perhaps of dramatic writings, to which most of the present remarks may be transferred) to the speedy perusal of another. Thus a habit is formed, a habit at first, perhaps, of limited indulgence, but a habit that is continually found more formidable and more encroaching. The appetite becomes too keen to be denied: and in proportion as it is more urgent, grows less nice and select in its fare. What would formerly have given offence now gives none. The palate is vitiated or made dull. The produce of the book-club, and the contents of the circulating library, are devoured with indiscriminate and insatiable avidity. Hence the mind is secretly corrupted. Let it be observed too, that in exact correspondence with the increase of a passion for reading novels, an aversion to reading of a more improving nature will gather strength. Even in the class of novels least objectionable in point of delicacy, false sentiment unfitting the mind for sober life, applause and censure distributed amiss, morality estimated by an erroneous standard, and the capricious laws and empty sanctions of honour set up in the place of religion, are the lessons usually presented. There is yet another consequence too important to be overlooked. The catastrophe and the incidents of these fictitious narratives commonly turn on the vicissitudes and effects of a passion the most powerful which agitates the human heart. Hence the study of them frequently creates a susceptibility of impression, and a premature warmth of tender emotions, which, not to speak of other possible effects, have been known to betray young women into a sudden attachment to persons unworthy of their affec-

tion, and thus to hurry them into marriages terminating in unhappiness."

Miss Orme. "He reasons excellently well against such writings; but to be candid, my dear Miss Holmes, and I know you idolize candour, I must confess I am rather partial to them. They serve to beguile away the tedious hours of unoccupied time. They are the fairies of fiction, in whose engaging society we contrive to forget the mortifications of life, and get through a day with tolerable composure, when we are prevented taking our walks abroad. And what a relief do they afford us when indisposed. Indeed I don't know what I should do if I were interdicted from such a source of exquisite gratification."

Miss Holmes. "I have no doubt but such reading affords you gratification, and enables you to get through the tedious hours of time with some degree of patience; but is it profitable?—Does it enlarge and strengthen the intellectual faculty?—Does it refine the *moral* taste? Does it give excitement to the best passions of our nature?—Does it tend to prepare us for our final destiny, as candidates for immortality?"

Miss Orme. "Every one, you know, must follow the bent of their own inclinations; and though it might be improper in you, who have a *more serious turn of mind*, to devote your time to such reading, yet I may claim the privilege of doing it. I am not bound to submit to the mortifications of a religious life, as I have not put on the veil of a public profession."

Miss Emma. "Very true, my dear. I think with you, that such reading is very engaging, particularly, when we cannot find any other source of amusement. But you must know that my sister wants to graft the habits of advanced piety on the stock of youthful vivacity, and carries her objections to every species of innocent gratification so far, that she cannot consent to sanction cards even in a private party."

Miss Orme. "Indeed! and does your religion forbid you to approach such an innocent game of pleasure?"

Miss Holmes. "My religion teaches me to avoid the appearance of evil."

Miss Orme. "But do you really think that any evil can result from such an amusing engagement?"

Miss Holmes. "Most certainly. I know a lady who never touched a pack of cards till after her marriage, but as soon as she did touch them, she became passionately fond of them. She first played with her husband—then a few select friends were invited to the game—then larger parties thronged her drawing-room—till at length, the passion had taken such an entire possession of her soul, that she neglected all her domestic duties, involved her husband in pecuniary embarrassments by the sums she lost; and eventually abandoned her home, and the sweet babes who were once permitted to call her mother, with a worthless wretch, who after degrading her, threw her off on the merciless contempt of the world! In a conversation which I lately had with her, when endeavouring to point her to *Him* who came into the world to save sinners, (for she is now in the last stage of a decline,) she owned that her ruin was owing to her passion for cards, which became so strong that her reason was unable to controul it."

Miss Orme. "But this is an extreme case, and quite inapplicable to us. I never play for much, nor do I suffer the passion to overcome me. I play for amusement, and not for profit—to pass away dull time in an agreeable manner, and not to pave the way for my ruin."

Miss Holmes. "You know, my dear, that our habits are imperceptibly formed, and that they as imperceptibly gain an ascendancy over us. Hence no one can say, when she first devotes her attention to any individual object of gratification, how much that object shall be permitted to enslave her passions. She may be restrained by circumstances from sustaining any material injury, but does she not expose herself to the hazard of being overcome? and if she should, she will then find it much more difficult to retrace her steps, and regain her self-controul, than to avoid the danger in the first instance."

Miss Orme. "But this game of hazard does not prove fatal to many, so that we may fairly calculate on escaping it."

Miss Holmes. "But if we admit for the sake of

the argument, that only a few are ruined by it, still it is not wise on our part to run the perilous risk. Suppose we should be amongst that ill-fated number, what recompence of reward should we receive? What? The scorn and contempt of the world which now throws its beguiling smiles and fascinations around us, to allure us to the dreadful evil, which lies in a state of concealment till its victims are entangled and undone."

Miss Orme. "You reason as though there was some fatal tendency in this game to lead its admirers to some of the more pernicious games which are played by the other sex; but you will permit me to say, that I cannot think you are correct. I will suppose a case which frequently occurs in social life. A virtuous family receives a visit from a few select friends; and in the evening the card tables are brought out, and they divide themselves into small parties and play a few games for their own amusement, without risking more than a few shillings. Now what evil can result from such a method of passing away the evening?"

Miss Holmes. "In the first place, there is a great sacrifice of time, without any adequate compensation. If the time thus devoted to an unprofitable amusement were employed in instructive conversation, some moral benefit would result from it. The intelligent members of such a domiciliary community would have it in their power to afford not only pleasure but valuable information to the more illiterate and uninformed: questions of importance, of deep interest, of perplexing difficulty would be discussed and illucidated—the events of the day would pass under a review—enlivening anecdotes would be told with all the humorous manner of the facetious narrator—and every one would have an opportunity of displaying and increasing the resources of his mind."

Miss Orme. "But, begging pardon for interrupting you, does not the introduction of cards, by occupying the attention of a party, prevent the conversation from degenerating into slander and themes of scandal? This advantage you have incautiously overlooked, but I have no doubt, on reflection, you will admit it to be a very important one."

Miss Holmes. "Such an apology is often made for a game which has become so prevalent amongst us; but you will permit me to say, that I am rather astonished that *you* should think of advancing it. It is an apology, my dear, which our enemies have brought forward to hold us up to ridicule and contempt, and may be regarded as the most pointed sarcasm that has ever been directed against us. 'Are we to have such an opinion of feminine justice, benevolence, delicacy, and candour, as to conclude, that women cannot pass a single evening otherwise than in the indulgence of detraction, unless their thoughts be occupied by the card-table: that their tongues, unless charmed to silence by attention to the game, will be incessantly exercised by calumny and malice?'"

"But in the case which you have introduced, I can see many positive evils which are likely to result from it. 'It is no exaggeration to affirm that there are recent instances of young women having speedily lost at play their entire fortunes. But does the mischief terminate in pecuniary distress?' Does not the game often give excitement to some of the worst passions, and some of the most censurable feelings of our nature? Have you never seen the scornful look thrown across the table when there has been what is termed an unlucky throw? Have you never felt its poignancy? Have you never known partnerships dissolved in anger, and mutual recriminations, when they have been contending with superior skill, or superior fortune? Have you not longed for the departure of the company more than for its entrance?"

Miss Orme. "Why you know, my dear, that the best things are sometimes liable to abuse, but that is no valid reason why they should be altogether abandoned. I admit that there is some force in your present objection, but then that objection is directed more against the *evil in us* than the *evil in the game*."

Miss Holmes. "Very true. The game itself, when viewed as unconnected with our evil passions and propensities, is perfectly simple and innocent, but when it comes in contact with them, it often stirs them up to a high, and sometimes awful degree of excitement. I was once present when two most intimate and endeared friends sat down with a few others at a game of whist.

They played for some time very pleasantly, till at length a trifling occurrence irritated their temper—angry looks were soon exchanged for angry words—reproachful terms were employed—the dagger of enmity was drawn, and though their mutual friends did all in their power to allay the storm, and heal the breach, yet they could not succeed. A challenge was given and accepted—they met—took their distance—when the signal was given they fired—one fell to rise no more, and the other is still living to deplore in useless regrets the catastrophe by which he deprived himself of one of his most intimate associates—a wife of one of the best of husbands—and three children of a father who tenderly loved them.”

Miss Orme. “How affecting! I have never known a quarrel which has begun over the card-table, end in a duel, though I must confess that I have known it dissolve some of the most intimate friendships. I have never known it to do more injury than this.”

Miss Holmes. “And is not this an evil which we ought to guard against with the utmost degree of conscientious vigilance?”

Miss Orme. “I always do. I begin with a resolute determination not to take offence, at least not to resent it.”

Miss Holmes. “But do you never give offence, and is that offence never resented? Have you never had occasion to deplore the *unlucky* game which, like Solomon’s whisperer, separates chief friends?”

“But even if it had not a tendency to produce this effect, and if it were not known to produce this effect, it very frequently kindles in the female breast no less than in the breast of the other sex, a passion for gaming, especially in the higher ranks of life, and induces them first to hang on as spectators, while the gentlemen hazard the loss of all their possessions; and who are often induced still nearer and nearer the precipice of destruction, because they are sanctioned by the presence of those who ought to prevent it. And when a female so far forgets herself as to tread on such unhallowed ground, and give the charm of her sanction to such a ruinous course of procedure, she not only receives injury herself, but becomes the means of entailing it on others.”

[No. 69.]

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

ON PROGRESS IN RELIGION.

PART I.



"Hence our Lord, when illustrating the nature of pure religion in the human heart, compares it to the grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." Page 8.

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1824.

ON PROGRESS IN RELIGION.

PART I.

"The regeneration of the Christian is his moral infancy. If we suppose him to live through even a moderate period after he is renewed; it is incredible, that his holiness should not increase in strength." *Dr. Dwight.*

The Corries spent the Evening at the Elms, in company with a few pious friends, who resided in the neighbourhood; and an allusion having been made to a discourse which most of them heard delivered at the Chapel on the preceding Sabbath, Mr. Corrie said, that the Evangelical preachers, in the present day, were vastly inferior in sound doctrinal sentiment to their celebrated predecessors." We have no Romaine in the Church, and," turning to Mr. Holmes, he added, "I suppose you admit, Sir, that we have no Newton?"

Mr. Holmes. "The Church, Sir, lost two of its brightest ornaments, when those good and faithful servants of Christ departed, to receive the recompense of reward; but yet the Lord has raised up others, who, if not equally eminent with Romaine or Newton, are qualified for the work which they have to do."

Mr. Corrie: "We have many men of talent in the Church, and many amongst the Dissenters; but, Sir, they do not preach *such a full and such a free salvation* as we have been accustomed to hear. They are perpetually urging us *to do something*, when we very well know that it is not in our power *to do any thing*. It is from God, as we express it in one of our prayers, 'that all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed.'"

Mr. Holmes. "Very true, Sir, but do we not perform the just works, and execute the good counsels, and cherish the holy desires, which originally come from him? To say, then, that we who are made alive from the dead, have *no power* to do any thing, is, in my opinion, not only contrary to the evidence of experience, but the testimony of the Scriptures; for, are we not *commanded* to grow in grace?"

Mr. Corrie. "This doctrine of progressive sanctification is becoming very fashionable amongst our modern divines; but our old ministers very justly exploded it, as an Arminian error. I am no holier than I was when I first believed; and I have never met with a real Christian who has not made the same confession."

Mr. Holmes. "We may not have made that improvement in knowledge and in purity, which we might have done; but I think we ought not to employ our negligence as a valid argument against a scriptural injunction. Are we not in the habit of mourning over the perverseness of our tempers, the levity of our dispositions, the impurity of our desires, the irregularity of our principles, the defects of our obedience; and praying for a larger measure of influence from above, to strengthen and sanctify our inner man? But, how can we justify such a habit of procedure, unless we believe that it is our duty, to *add to our faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity?* And does not the Apostle, in the chapter from whence I have made this quotation, connect our present diligence, in this branch of our obligation to God, with our triumphant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Mr. Corrie. "Then, Sir, you place some dependance on your moral attainments, for an entrance into heaven; which is a virtual rejection of the glorious doctrine of salvation by grace."

Mr. Holmes. "No, Sir; I expect to be saved by grace, through faith; but at the same time, I admit, that the holy principles which are implanted in my heart, are to acquire a progressive degree of influence over me. I feel, that when I would do good, evil is present with me; but am I to allow the evil to overcome me without making any resistance? I feel a power to *will* that which is good, but have not the power to perform it; am I then to make no effort? Do we not read that *He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength?*"

Mr. Corrie. "The admission of this doctrine will

prove destructive of our peace and confidence, by diverting our attention from Christ Jesus, in whom we are accepted as complete, and fixing it on our own experience; and this, in my opinion, is the cause, why so many are deprived of the rich consolation of grace; and are left to pursue the way to the kingdom in a state of spiritual darkness."

Mr. Holmes. "If, Sir, we substitute our experience for the atonement of Jesus Christ, and found our hope of future happiness on the higher degrees of our personal attainments, rather than the merit of his obedience and death, I admit that our peace would be destroyed, and that we should be left without the light of the divine countenance. But this is not done. We simply adhere to the sacred injunction, which requires us to *examine ourselves, to prove ourselves, and to know ourselves.* And how can we know our true character, and our real moral condition, without looking into our heart, without scrutinizing the actions of our life, and without comparing all our thoughts, and feelings; and desires, and expressions, and doings, with the rules of our duty, which are prescribed in the word of God? And does not this process of self-inspection issue in a more full and deep conviction of our sinfulness and unworthiness—and induce us to embrace, with more eager faith, and more ardent gratitude, that scheme of mercy which makes such ample provision for the salvation of the chief of sinners? I believe, Sir, you were at the Chapel on Sunday Evening."

Mr. Corrie. "Yes, Sir, I was; but I did not approve of the discourse. I like Mr. K— upon the whole. I think him a good man, and a good preacher; but I cannot agree with him on all points, especially the one which he discussed on Sabbath Evening. I never expect to be free from sin; till I enter heaven."

Mr. Holmes. "Nor, Sir, did Mr. K— ever insinuate, that it was possible for any one to attain to a state of sinless perfection in this life; though he certainly proved, at least in my opinion, that it was no less the privilege than the duty of every Christian to aim at it."

Mr. Corrie. "But what use to make the effort, if we have no hope of succeeding; and to urge us to do it, is

a species of spiritual tyranny, which requires the tale of bricks, without supplying the straw."

Mr. Holmes. "We may not hope to attain a state of entire perfection in this life; but being strengthened by the Spirit of God in our inner man, we may attain to higher degrees of personal purity, and devotion.—Surely, Sir, you will not say, that we hate sin as much as we may be induced to hate it! that we love God as much as we may be induced to love him! that our faith, our patience, our submission, our zeal, our humility have acquired that degree of strength and ardour, which admits of no increase! Surely, Sir, you will not contend, that the motives of our conduct are as pure as they may become by the renewing influence of the Holy Spirit."

Mr. Corrie. "I admit, Sir, that God could, if he pleased, make us, even now, as holy as the spirits of the just who are made perfect; but for wise, and mysterious reasons, he permits us to remain imperfect and all efforts to rise above the level of our present depraved condition, will merely serve to plunge us deeper into the *slough of despond*. I expect to be saved by grace, but never expect to be free from sin, till I enter heaven."

Mr. Holmes. "Well, Sir, we will not pursue the subject any longer, as it is not likely that I shall succeed, in convincing you of the possibility of making progress in knowledge and in grace, after the failure of our judicious minister, Mr. Kent; but I most readily agree with you in your last expression: I do not expect to be free from sin, till I enter heaven."

The Holmes's were so much delighted with the Sermon, that, at the suggestion of Miss Holmes, an application was made to the Rev. Mr. K. for a copy of it, which he very politely complied with: It was delivered to a very crowded and attentive audience, and as its publication may promote the spiritual improvement and happiness of the reader, it is now given from the press, with all its excellencies and defects.

But grow in Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory, both now and for ever. Amen.

The scheme of truth, which the scriptures contain,

reveals doctrines the most sublime, and enjoins precepts the most pure; and making provision for the well being of society, while it absolves penitent transgressors from the guilt of their sins, it brings along with it, a strong internal evidence of its divine origin. Instead of relaxing the claims of morality and virtue, as some impiously assert, it increases the solemnity of the sanction by which they are established and enforced; and urges those who have received it to display, in a more luminous manner, the excellency and amiability of its spirit and its temper; while it guards them by warnings the most awful and impressive, from imbibing error, which may corrupt their moral principles and then endanger their felicity. It enforces a progressive advancement in knowledge, and in piety as the most satisfactory evidences of the genuineness of their faith. *Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory, both now and for ever. Amen.*

I. What does this growth in grace imply?

1. It naturally supposes that those to whom the injunction applies, are in a *state of grace*.

By this expression, we mean, that those who are required to grow in grace, have already experienced a moral transformation of mind, by which they are in some small degree conformed to the moral image of God. As we do not anticipate an effect, without an adequate cause, either in the natural, or in the moral world, it would be as absurd to expect those to grow in grace who are dead in trespasses and in sins, as it would be romantic, to calculate on gathering fruit, from the lifeless trunk, which some tempestuous storm has rooted up from the ground. If the plant grows, it must be possessed of a living, germinating principle; it must be planted in a genial soil—it must strike its roots and fibres in the earth, and by the mysterious laws of association, absorb what is salutary—it must turn its leaves and its branches to the sun, and inhale the healthy breeze and solar influence. In like manner, the principles of spiritual life, must be infused into the

mind, before it can expand its energy; or grow up to a state of vigour, or of excellence.

2. And when the principle of life is implanted in the soul, our text implies that there must be a voluntary agency on our part, in order to this growth.

At the period when the grace of life is infused in the mind, the mind is as passive as was the body of Lazarus, when the Saviour stood beside his grave, and remanded back his departed spirit; or as were the darkened eyes of Bartimeus, when sight was miraculously restored—but no sooner does this moral renovation take place, than our active agency commences. Hence, while all the actions of spiritual life originate in the renovation of the soul, which is the immediate and exclusive work of the Holy Spirit; yet, in consequence of our individual agency in their performance, they are described as our own. Repentance is the gift of Jesus, who is exalted to be a *Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins*; but yet repentance is our own act. We repent—we feel the pang of sorrow—we confess our guilt—we pray for mercy. Faith is the gift of God: but we trust in Christ—we have all joy and peace in believing, yet we believe the mortification of the deeds of the body, is effected by the assistance of the Spirit; and yet we practise it. *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* It is God, who works within us to will and to do of his own good pleasure, yet we are required to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. It is the Holy One who giveth grace to the humble, and yet we are to *humble ourselves* before the Lord. He implants the fear of himself in our heart; and yet we are to *walk in his fear* all the day long. And this continuance, is no less our duty, than it is the natural tendency of the mind. It cannot be withheld without as manifest an encroachment on the constituted order of things, as it would be to expect that a wise and healthy man should refuse the aliment, which he feels to be necessary to his sustenance. It is true, some imagine that a renewed man never makes any progress, either in knowledge or in grace; but I am fully conscious, from my personal observation, that the

contentions amongst real Christians on this point, arise principally from their different phraseology of speech. If I were to say to a child, on his going to school, I hope you will grow in knowledge and in goodness, would any one be at a loss to conceive my meaning? Would it not be evident, without any formal explanation, that I wished him to acquire more extensive information in the various branches of science; and to improve in his temper, and disposition, and in the vigour, and activity of his virtuous principles? And if, my Christian Brethren, we are commanded to grow in knowledge and in grace, what meaning can we affix to the injunction, unless it be, that we endeavour to acquire more correct and enlarged views of the scheme of redemption, and carry out into more visible manifestation and more active exercises the great principles of our faith. When the heart is renewed, every holy principle is implanted, which will ever be attained by the Christian, even in the heavenly world; but at the time of their implantation, they are not complete in the degree of their strength and purity. They are, if we keep to the figurative language of the Scripture, as the feeble, though perfect stem, and roots, and fibres, and tendons of the young plant, which, animated by the principle of vegetable life, grows, larger and stronger till it becomes a tree. Hence our Lord, when illustrating the nature of pure religion in the human heart, compared it to the grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; *but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.* Hence the progress the Christian makes, is compared to the sun which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. This progress, indeed, may differ in degree in different individuals; and those who are called last, and who possess the fewest advantages, may surpass their seniors, who may enjoy more abundant privileges. Hence some display the wisdom and gravity of age, amidst the sprightliness of youth; the integrity of long tried worth, with the first buddings of fidelity; the delicacy and beauty of verdant honour, with the earliest blossoms of social friendship; the ardour of love for God

man, with the earliest kindlings of affection; and

spring up amongst us, laden with the matured fruits of righteousness and peace, without requiring the long progression of a ripening profession. Even in the same individual, to quote the language of a judicious writer, the degree of this growth may be various at different periods. Thus, the tree, under the rigour of the wintry blasts, stripped of its vernal foliage, and robbed of nearly half its bulk, may present its beaten boughs and shrivelled branches : its growth suffering a temporary pause, and even its life, to an unskilled observer, appearing to be at an end. Nevertheless, it is still growing underground ; by the scent of the waters it shall yet revive, and, in proper season, shall expand in magnitude and beauty. Even so, the Christian's growth, in this wintry clime, may often seem to be at a stand, and sometimes may appear to decay rather than increase,—withered for a time, perhaps, by the baneful blast of error, or shrivelled by the pestilential breath of evil example, in this unwholesome atmosphere,—parched by the predominating influence of some evil principle, or base passion yet unsubdued,—scorched by Satan's fiery darts, those blasts immediately from hell,—or dried up by the restraints of gracious influences from on high. Under one or all of these, the fair expanding moral plant, like Jonah's gourd, may wither in a night, and almost disappear. When with such strokes God corrects his people for their iniquity, he wastes their spiritual beauty as a moth, and manifests, that even the Christian, in himself, is wholly vanity. At such a period, not merely the observer, but even the Christian himself, may doubt, not only his growth, but even his spiritual existence,—may question if his roots have any hold at all of the right soil, when his blossoms go up as the dust, and all his hopes are as the giving up of the ghost. But, notwithstanding this apparent decay, he is still increasing. If not sending forth his goodly boughs, and far extending branches, still he is growing under ground, striking more firmly in the soil, whence all his nourishment, and beauty, and fruit proceed ; by the scent of waters he also shall yet revive. Those dispensations, by the blessing of God, are made eminently subservient to his future growth. In this manner he is emptied of self-confidence; his humility is increased, cautious fears are awakened, tenderness of conscience is

promoted, and, by the vigorous exertions of an almost conquered faith, the principle itself is strengthened. Thus is he prepared to bring forth a harvest joyous and abundant, on the return of the summer sun. In the beautiful language of inspiration, "He shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon: His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon." They that dwell under the shadow of the church, or of her Head of influences, "shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as wine of Lebanon."—"the righteous," says the Psalmist, "shall flourish like the palm-tree; he shall grow as the cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall bring forth fruit in old age."

Such is the progressive nature of the Christian's growth. As there is no period in the present life when he can sit down satisfied with his present attainments, so, forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth towards those that are before, he presses towards the mark of presentholiness, and the prize of eternal glory. His union to the Lord Jesus, and communion with him in his grace and fulness, secure his growth. He goes from strength to strength, and makes increase with the increase of God.

II. Wherein does this growth consist?—

1. In knowledge.

That the soul be without knowledge is not good, but there is no knowledge of so much importance, as to *know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent*. But, though we may acquire a partial knowledge of the character of God, and of the way of salvation through the mediation of Jesus Christ, yet we are not to remain satisfied with it. While the Scriptures bring down the most sublime truths to the level of the most unfurnished capacity, which is illumed by the light of life, it contains doctrines and facts, and propositions, which soar above the comprehension of the most enlarged, and acute. The Scriptures contain the treasures of knowledge and of wisdom; and it is by searching them with close and devout attention, that the Christian grows* *in the knowledge of God*. "As the Christian reads the Bible, which

* The Author is indebted to Dr. Dwight for this quotation.

will ever be one of his favourite employments, he will find God, the great subject of it, every where exhibited to his view; and exhibited continually in lights, ever varying from each other. In the succession and in the comparison of an endless multitude of passages, all of them diverse, and all of them instructive, he will continually gain new apprehensions of the greatness and wisdom, the goodness, mercy, and truth of the Being, from whom he derived his own existence, and from whom he received all his blessings.

“These apprehensions will be enlarged, and improved, by his attention to *the works of creation and providence*. The works of God are always full of instruction to those who read and love his Word. Every person who peruses the Psalms with attention, must have observed how much instruction, and what elevated affections and purposes, David acquired from this source. Here, like David, every devout mind will see clearly elucidated the truth, reasonableness, and wisdom of very many scriptural doctrines; the propriety and excellence of very many precepts; the cogency of very many motives to his duty; and the fulfilment of very many predictions and promises. These, in innumerable instances, although unregarded by men of this world, will force themselves hourly, and irresistibly, on the eye of the Christian; for they are all congenial with his wishes, hopes, and designs; and to dwell upon them will be his peculiar delight.

“The dispensation of God to himself, his family, his friends, and his country, will in a peculiar manner cast a new light over all these interesting subjects. Whatever immediately concerns ourselves, and ours, becomes of course an object of our minute attention. As it is more thoroughly studied, so it is necessarily better understood, than the same things contained in dispensations to others. In our own blessings, and afflictions, many exhibitions are made to us of the character of God; and many proofs of his wisdom, goodness, and truth, are realized, which will hardly be derived from any other source. Here our Maker is seen in a thousand lights of providential care and kindness, as our Preserver, and Benefactor; as the proper object of *ultimate hope and confidence*; of which we should have

known little or nothing from any other source. At the same time this knowledge is deeply endeared to us, or solemnly impressed, by the events which disclose it; and is therefore deeply felt, and long remembered. Hence it becomes a part of our current thoughts, and is ready to be applied on every proper occasion to every useful purpose. In this manner the mind becomes enriched with a train of the most useful views, solid arguments, and important doctrines; which raise it from its former level to a nobler elevation on the scale of intelligent being; and furnish it for higher enjoyment, and more extensive usefulness, in the kingdom of its Maker.

"In a similar manner Christians improve in the knowledge of their duty. All the duty of the Christian is originally learned from the Scriptures. As his acquaintance with this sacred volume enlarges, the precepts, which comprise the whole of his duty, are more and more known, remembered, compared, and made to elucidate each other. These from time to time he applies to his own practical concerns; and thus, as they pass under his eye from day to day, he learns more accurately the nature, extent, and spirituality of the precepts themselves, and the safest and best modes of applying them to the conduct of his life. In this manner the Scriptural precepts may be said to be always at hand; always ready for use; so as to guide him safely and happily, in many cases, where others would be compelled to struggle with doubt and perplexity.

"It ought to be added, that the knowledge of the Christian, acquired immediately from Scripture, and from his own experience, is greatly increased by the conversation of his fellow-Christians, and by the valuable books, written by wise and good men concerning the subjects of Religion.

[No. 70.

THE

EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

ON PROGRESS IN RELIGION.

PART II.



“They resemble the heroic warrior, who raises the siege, and routs the foe, and turns the weapons of attack on his columns; but who, after strengthening the fortifications, and embellishing the exterior ramparts of the citadel, perishes without the gates, where he chose to pitch his tent.”

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ON PROGRESS IN RELIGION.

PART II.

"This present world is to us a valley of weeping. In our passage through it, we are refreshed by the streams of divine grace flowing down from the great Fountain of consolation; and thus are we enabled to proceed from one degree of holiness to another, until we come to the glorified vision of God in heaven itself."

Bishop Horne.

"MANY," said the impassioned preacher, "study the Scripture as they study any human composition,—merely to ascertain the meaning of the writers, and to acquire an accurate knowledge of the subjects on which they pour the light of a clear elucidation,—without feeling the importance of reducing to a practical application the precepts which they enjoin. They grow in knowledge, by which they are qualified to enter on the discussion of religious subjects; but not in grace, by which they would display the beauty and glory of the Christian character. They improve their intellect by the accuracy of their investigations, while their heart is not purified by the influence of the truth. They send forth their vindications of the divine origin of Christianity, while they remain ignorant of its spirit, and ulterior design. They resemble the heroic warrior, who raises the siege—and routs the foe—and turns the weapons of attack on his columns; but who, after strengthening the fortifications, and embellishing the exterior ramparts of the citadel, perishes without the gates, where he chose to pitch his tent. Or to vary the figure, I will quote the apt and striking language of our Lord. *Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it.* You, brethren, are to grow, not only in knowledge, but,

* 2. In grace.

"This is a generic term, and includes within it all the principles of the Christian character which we are to exercise and display. But as I wish to be precise in my statements, I will reduce them to a numerical order.

"(1.) To grow in grace is to grow in faith.

"Faith in the existence of God—in the truth of revelation—and in submission to his authority, is of so much importance, that without it, it is impossible to please him, Heb. xi. 6. This Christian principle pre-supposes the partial concealment of the truths which we are to believe; and that we are called to occupy a moral position where nought is seen by the eye—where no voice is heard by the ear—where the power of no authority acts with a direct force of impression on the conscience, or on the will. And is it not so? Do we not love an unseen Saviour? Do we not revere an inaudible authority? Do we not enjoy communion with an invisible Friend?—in whom we trust, for wisdom to guide us in the season of perplexity—for strength to support us in the hour of peril—for consolation under the diversified calamities of life—and for eternal blessedness. When this principle is first implanted, it is genuine, but weak;—we can scarcely venture to rely on the faithfulness and the love of God, though we cannot forbear: and hence, like the woman in the Gospel, who was so abashed by her own unworthiness, that she could do nothing more than touch the hem of the Saviour's garment, we make approaches to an act of dependence which we cannot perform.

"To grow in this principle, so important in itself, and so necessary to the increase of every grace, is to become active, vigorous, and persevering in its exercise—to maintain our confidence in God, not only when favoured with sensible manifestations, but even when these are withdrawn—when, though clouds and darkness may be spread over the face of his throne, and we walk in darkness, having no light, we nevertheless trust in the name of the Lord, and stay ourselves upon our God—honouring him with our confidence—holding him fast by his faithfulness pledged in his promises—saying, in holy determination of soul, with Job, *Although he slay me, yet will I trust in him*—when, fixing on the immu-

table veracity of God, as an anchor, sure and steadfast, it preserves the soul calm, and firm, and buoyant amid the blasts of temptation—the breaking dispensations of Providence—the frowns, or the persecutions of the world—amid all the vicissitudes of time, enduring as seeing him that is invisible, and realizing the blessings of a future and better world.

“We grow in faith, when self-confidence, and all the legal principles of the heart lose their power as principles of action—when we live more entirely out of and above ourselves, deriving daily from the Lord Jesus all that we need for duty or trial. The Apostle Paul speaks as if he had lost his personal identity in Christ ;—*I live ; yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me ; and the life that I live in the flesh is by the faith of the Son of God.* We grow in faith, when we go through life leaning on his arm—calling in his omnipotent aid on every emergency—glorying in our own weakness and infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon us—and feeling the spirit of the Apostle’s statements,—*When I am weak, then am I strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. — I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.* Faith possesses all its power, as it leads us out of ourselves, and to an entire dependence on the fulness of Christ for all things. It is thus, by abiding in him, that our spiritual existence is supported, and the beauty, fruitfulness, and growth of the soul are promoted. As we would, then, obey the injunction of the text, how necessary for us the prayer of the disciples,—*Lord, increase our faith!*

“(2.) To grow in grace, is to grow in the purity and ardour of love to God and man.

“Love to God necessarily takes its rise from the two principles we have already considered. Love of every kind has excellence, real or supposed, for its object, and is greatly strengthened and increased by relation to, or interest in that object. Although love to God is itself a fruit of the Spirit, yet, in its exercise, it springs immediately from a saving discovery of the glory of God—the infinite excellence of his character, and from the holy dependence of the soul upon him as our own God—as our Father, and everlasting Friend in Christ Jesus. The introduction of this principle destroys the

reign of enmity in the human heart; it radically changes the whole man; and this love now forms the grand feature of the Christian's character. Founded itself upon illumination and dependence, love becomes the governing principle of the heart—the grand impulse to all future gracious activity. *The love of Christ constraineth us.—We love him, because he first loved us.* An impulse this, incomparably more delightful, more powerful and permanent, than slavish fear, or servile hope. Our exertions in religion may have been formerly languid and irregular; but, constrained by love, they become ardent and uniform, diligent and persevering: the whole powers of the mind, obedient to the impulse, harmonize; and even the members of the body cheerfully obey. The external duties of religion, if at all attended to before, were unprofitable, and rejected by God; but being now animated by the holy flame of love, which is the fulfilling of the law, they are acceptable in his sight through Jesus Christ.

“To grow in grace, is especially to grow in love. The law of God is not only the ground of moral obligation, it is also the measure or standard of perfection in the Christian growth. Perfect conformity to this law, in its extent and spirituality, is manhood in grace. But the grand soul and sum of this law, as explained and enforced by Christ himself, is love. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, soul, mind, and strength. This, said our Lord, is the first great commandment; and the second is like unto it, viz. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two hang all the law and the prophets.* To grow in this principle, is to feel its influence more and more, in drawing out our whole souls in holy aspirations after God, preferring communion with him to all things else. It is to feel it strong as death, urging us to uniform obedience—to display, amid every obstructing cause, the evidence of genuine love stated by our blessed Lord;—*He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.* In short, all that the Christian performs is a labour of love; whether it be an act of obedience to the first table of the law, or terminating more immediately upon our fellow-men.

“Growth in love may seem, perhaps, opposed to the

general feeling and experience of the people of God. Many may be sensible of an increase of humility, of diffidence in themselves, of knowledge, and perhaps even of dependence, who nevertheless lament from day to day their want of love, or the apparent decrease of this holy principle. How many look back with fear upon their former feelings in religion, and mourn that they cannot now command the same fervour! Even God himself mentions the Christian's early love:—*I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals.* While this change is striking, we would do well to pause, and institute a serious inquiry into the grounds of our former and present feelings. This much, however, we may grant,—that usually at this period a warmer glow is felt than the Christian can afterwards attain. The transition from the terrors of the law to the faith and joy of the gospel is sometimes short. The scene, as if of Sinai,—the thunders and the lightning—the blackness, and the darkness, and the tempest, ready to burst upon the individual, and sink him to eternal woe, being immediately succeeded by the still small voice of peace and reconciliation, heard by an appropriating faith,—the awful, but joyful contrast awakens an emotion of love and gratitude, perhaps seldom felt in the same degree, even by the Christian, while on earth. Besides, the principle of novelty in our constitution has here its highest operation, and most delightful effect, when we are newly introduced from moral darkness into God's marvellous light. Every view in this new spiritual world, into which the sinner is introduced, makes a deep impression, and consequent delightful feeling. The character of God, as merciful and gracious to the individual—pardoning his iniquity, transgression, and sin—proclaiming peace in the gospel, and by this means revealing love to the heart, saying with divine power, *I am the Lord thy God*,—every view of divine grace, and the wonderful economy through which it is manifested, and bestowed upon the human race,—every view of Christ, in the dignity of his person—the glory, fitness, and fulness of his official character—the value and validity of his atonement—the extent and preciousness of his benefits—the extent, adaptation, and glorious stability of the covenant of

grace, in which the sinner finds all his desire, and all his salvation ;—these, and other gracious views in this spiritual world, when first obtained by an appropriating faith, fill the Christian with a peace that passes all understanding—nay, with joy, and such sensible emotions of gratitude and love, as in after life is seldom his attainment. Nor is this delight supine and inoperative : it manifests itself by such a corresponding activity in the ways of God's commandments, as makes him often in future life lament its absence.

“ Nevertheless this love, when genuine, must increase. Though unaccompanied in after times with so much emotion, so much enthusiastic warmth, in purity and strength, in settled, lasting vigour it increases. In settled judgment, and in calm, decided choice, it grows in beautiful proportion to the illumination and faith of its possessor. Every farther discovery of its object draws forth its vigorous exertions. And though he cannot comprehend the height, and depth, and breadth, and length of divine love, he nevertheless perceives and feels so much as warms and captivates his inmost soul. And occasionally he rises into the apostle's exercise ;—*Who shall separate me from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord.* Growing in love, the Christian grows in grace ; dwelling in love, he dwells in God, and God in him, and thus makes increase with the increase of God. This principle extends to all God's commandments—to the place where his honour dwelleth—to the saints, now, in his estimation, the excellent ones of the earth, and with whom are his delights. Love to God and to his people is the same principle, modified by its objects. Love to the people of God is merely a modification of love to him—an extensive application of this holy principle to what of God is seen in them.

“(3.) To grow in grace, is to grow in zeal for the honour of God.

"True zeal for God is altogether different from a blind and fiery bigotry—an unbridled censorious spirit—or an uncharitable, fierce contention about words, or fictions of our own minds. It is a higher degree of love—the vehement fervour of the affections towards God, and the honour of his name; or, if differently modified, it consists in a holy indignation at sin, and a poignant feeling of grief, because God is dishonoured, and religion despised. This principle, though always accompanied with some degree of emotion,—with the extacy of love, or the heat of anger,—yet, being founded in illumination, directed and chastened by divine authority, is perfectly consistent with Christian meekness, patience, and charity. Hence we find its highest exercise in those who have been most remarkable for what have been called the amiable graces. Thus the meek Moses was remarkable for his zeal; and thus grace was shewn in its full perfection throughout the whole life, on earth, of the meek and lowly Jesus. *Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?* said he, when a youth of twelve years. And from his decision in purging the temple of buyers and sellers, the disciples remembered the prophetic declaration of the Psalmist,—*The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up.*

"This zeal, in every religious service, the law of God requires. We are commanded not merely to love the Lord our God, but to love him with all our heart, mind, and strength. We are called to do with all our might whatsoever our hand findeth to do—to love the brethren with a pure heart *fervently*—to have fervent charity among ourselves—to continue *instant* in prayer—to be always *zealously affected* in every good thing,—in short, to serve God with the vigour of our faculties, and not with the torn and the lame.

"Though this holy fervour must mingle itself with every service of religion, our zeal ought to be especially directed to the maintenance of divine truth. The cause of truth and holiness is a cause constantly under the patronage of the Ruler of the universe. The God of Zion keepeth the truth for ever. It is that cause which he himself will plead and maintain in every age. In the present economy, the means which he employs for its maintenance are, the zeal and faithful exertions of his

people. By a succession of faithful witnesses, it is to be exhibited, held fast, and transmitted pure and entire to future generations ;—*The fathers to the children shall make known thy truth.* His testimonies and his laws he placed in Israel ;—he made that people the guardians of a system so sacred, and so much connected with the glory of God, and the salvation of men, and charged the fathers that they should make it known unto their children. Every Christian is called *to buy the truth—not to sell it—and to hold fast the form of sound words.* Believers are commanded *to strive together for the faith of the Gospel—to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints.* The Christian redeemed by the blood of Christ, and renovated by his grace, appearing under the banners of the King of Zion, must approve himself a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Summoning up holy fortitude, he must be valiant for the truth upon earth. Constituted, by his confession of the name of the Redeemer, a witness for Christ, he must bear testimony for the whole sacred system, and be zealous especially for those parts of divine truth which are at present litigated or impugned.

“(4.) To grow in grace, is to grow in spiritual-mindedness.

“Spirituality of affection is not any one particular grace, but a general feature or character of the Christian life. It may be considered as consisting chiefly in devotedness of heart to God, and divine things—in a proper valuation of heavenly blessings—in the habitual voluntary contemplation of these objects—in the rest and consolation which the heart finds in them—in ardent desires, and a corresponding activity to secure an interest in these benefits. It is to seek the kingdom of heaven first in order—first in ardour of pursuit ; having our conversation daily in heaven, whence we look for the Saviour ; and this temper so moulding our conduct, as to manifest to all that we seek another and a better country.

“The grand Agent in the production and increase of this heavenly temper is the Holy Spirit. From him alone comes that sacred flame which enkindles holy affections. If we muse, the fire must burn. And it is only as we are subjects of his saving influence that we

can make progress in this heavenly frame. In regard to the manner of this increase, however, it may be observed, that all spiritual affections are modified in the degree of their exercise by the principles we have already considered. The Christian's valuation of heavenly things, and his desires after divine manifestations are always modified by the degree of his saving illumination, his faith, and his love. In proportion as these are enjoyed, and are in present operation, heavenly blessings rise into view in their glory and importance, and in his estimation all sublunary objects and enjoyments sink in the scale.

"Under the influence of this temper, the Christian is ardent and uniform in his attendance upon divine institutions, where his heavenly affections find their proper nourishment. And when in the house of God, this temper distinguishes him from the mere formalist or hypocrite. While others come merely to the place or to the ordinances themselves, he is not satisfied with the external part of service; he feels uneasy, and he retires disappointed and dejected, if communion with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ be not his privilege. In prospect of entering the sanctuary, and when there the aspirations of his soul are,—*O God, thou art my God! early will I seek thee. My soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* When, in kindness unto me, wilt thou be pleased to come? O God! all that I desire is still before thine eyes. *Lord! lift upon me the light of thy countenance. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

"Entangled with the cares and avocations of the present life—occasionally ensnared with its allurements—marred in all his exercise by the body of sin and death, the Christian, under this temper, naturally turns his eye to the future and better world, and, with submission to the will of God, longs for deliverance from the present state. Having felt in some good measure the felicity of communion with God,—a blessing which his present physical weakness and moral imperfection forbid to be

his enjoyment in any great degree, or for any long period,—his hopes and desires leave the present unhappy scene, and terminate in the better country. These hopes and desires increase in strength, and frequency of exercise, as he approaches the confines of that good land. There he knows he shall see Christ as he is, and know even as he is known. There he knows the weary shall be at rest, and enjoy everlasting refreshing, when the toils and heat of the day of life are at an end. When delivered from the ruins of his present moral condition, and all that is painful in the present state—when death itself shall be swallowed up in victory, he expects to enter into a state of perfect holiness, and full and eternal felicity—into that land where his sun shall no more go down, nor his moon withdraw its shining—where the Lord God shall be his everlasting light, and the days of his mourning shall be ended. With this hope, and these prospects, and that faith which enters in within the vail—which realizes unseen blessings, and gives them a present being in the soul, the Christian lives above the world, and looks and longs for the final, full, and glorious consummation of redemption. As the servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and the hireling looketh for the reward of his work—as the child longs for the state of manhood, and the minor heir for the year of his majorité, so the Christian, advancing in heavenly-mindedness, longs for the period of moral maturity, and for the glories of that state which is his high and happy destiny. *Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better. We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon with our house from heaven, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.*

“Among the attainments made by such as have been Christians for a length of time, there is one which we ought not to pass over:—*They are almost universally more catholic than those who are young.* By catholic here I do not mean what in modern times is frequently meant by the word. This honourable term, like many others, has been purloined by men without worth, to denote and to ornament a part of their own unworthy character. It has been employed to designate a shameful indifference to truth and error—to virtue and sin. This

is a direct contrast to the spirit of the men of whom I have been speaking. These men are more attached to truth, and more opposed to error—more ardent in their love to virtue, and their hatred of sin. But they are possessed of more gentleness, and more charitableness in their thoughts—more candour in their judgments—more sweetness in their dispositions—and more evangelical tenderness and moderation in their conduct. They are less ready to censure, and more pleased to commend. Truth they prize more for its own sake, and are less solicitous to ask from whom it comes. Error they oppose in all men; especially in themselves and their friends. Little things they value less, and great ones more. On the names so numerously found in the Christian world, and so highly valued by many who inhabit it, they place little importance. On the parties and sects which disgrace that world they look only with disapprobation and regret. To real and evangelical worth they attach high consideration. Over the feuds and janglings which have so extensively prevailed among the professed followers of Christ, and often about subjects of little moment, they cast an eye of compassion; and lament, that those whom Christ has loved—for whom he died—who will finally be placed at the right hand of the Judge—and who will be united for ever in the friendship of heaven, should be kept asunder, alienated, engaged in contention, and at times even embarked in hostilities, for reasons which they will blush to recite before the last tribunal, and which will awaken shame, if shame can be awakened, in heaven itself.” *

* The author is indebted to others for the greater part of the sentiments contained in this number.

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

ON THE LOSS OF CHILDREN.



“This privilege was denied him. For offering strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not, *there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them; and they died before the Lord.* With what emotions did he gather up their ashes, or anticipate the day of final retribution. Unhappy father, doomed to witness thy two sons cut off from the land of the living by the judgments of heaven!! What is the loss of children in infancy, and falling by the stroke of nature, compared to this?”

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ON THE LOSS OF CHILDREN.

"O! I will fill these souls with virtue,
And warm their bosoms with devotion's flame.
Aid me, celestial Spirit, with thy grace,
And be my labours with thy influence crown'd.
Without it they were vain."

To Mrs. Loader.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"THE complacency I felt in returning to my peaceful home,* and the pleasure I enjoyed in an interview with my beloved family, was considerably augmented on being presented with your letter. I seized it with eagerness, fondly conceiving it to be the precursor which should announce your early and long-wished-for arrival at the Elms. Judge, then, of my consternation, when, instead of being allowed to realize the pleasing anticipation, an instantaneous demand was made upon the tenderest sympathies of my nature.

"The effect produced upon my spirits by this sudden transition of feeling, you can fully comprehend, because your 'heart is apt to feel;' but I assure you it exceeds my powers of description. I was thankful, however, to obtain a temporary relief, in obeying the apostolic injunction, which bids us *weep with those that weep*. And is that lovely blossom withered while exhaling such fragrance all around her? and has that paradise of domestic bliss been inundated by the resistless flood of death, while the petrified inhabitants have been compelled to witness the desire of their eyes borne off by its violence, beyond the boundary of this precarious life? This event has confounded me; the dear girl is at this moment so present to my imagination, that I can hardly believe she has left, for ever left, our society;—but you saw her die, if death it may be nominated. A venerable friend, speaking of her a short time since, observed, that he thought her to be a very extraordinary young person. 'She is,' he remarked, 'at once the intelligent companion, and the

* See No. 64 of this Series, page 5.

sportive child. Where did you ever discover such attainments combined with such infantine simplicity? Ah! little did he, or I, or any of us, then forebode, that heaven-born spirit would so soon take its flight to its celestial home. But how can the father's, how can the mother's heart endure this overwhelming visitation, which like the shock of a recent earthquake, whose undulating motion has not yet ceased to vibrate, seems to threaten the destruction of all their earthly felicity. Happy for them they know God, who, I trust, will be their refuge and strength, and their present help in this time of trouble. Selfish as I am, when the delightful converse of my friend is the object of enjoyment, I can freely relinquish this gratification to the plaintive, yet imperative claim of sorrow. Remain, I entreat you, with the dear bereaved parents till, like the benign angel of Gethsemane, who supported the agonized Redeemer, you have succeeded in your sympathizing efforts to strengthen and console their minds with the consolations with which you, under your numerous trials, are so eminently comforted of God; and which the peculiar pathos of your manner, and your deep experience in divine truth qualify you, above many, to impart.

"The enclosed letter which I have ventured to address to our disconsolate friends, I am conscious will acquire its chief interest by being received from your hand. Gratify me, by making the presentation, accompanied by every thing you think proper to say, to render it acceptable, and,

"Believe me to remain,

"Yours affectionately,

"LOUISA."

"Disqualified as I am, by inexperience of the inconceivable anguish of a bereaved parent's breast, to address my highly esteemed friends, on the present painful occasion, I almost regret the temerity which has induced me to forward to you the following lines, which would be regarded by some as an instance of intrusive officiousness. But knowing how condescendingly you receive every token of respect from the most insignificant of your friends, I am emboldened to approach with the offer of my condolence, and to assure you how deeply I lament, that the King of terrors, like the wayfaring man,

has entered your dwelling, and regaled himself with the little ewe lamb, which ate of your own meat, and drank of your own cup, and lay in your bosom, and was unto you a daughter.

“It is the unspeakable privilege of those who believe in God, and rely on the merits of his Son for salvation unto eternal life, to view every event connected with their history, in the light of revealed truth; and although these hallowed beams do not always shine with brightness sufficiently refulgent to disperse the mysterious gloom which is frequently permitted to envelop the most pleasing prospects; yet by their enlightening and cheering influences they support the mind, and direct the attention of the Christian to some sure and suitable word of promise which invariably accompanies every trial which is appointed him by his heavenly Father. Thus when visited by an affliction that not only pierces his heart, but perplexes his judgment, he is accosted by the sacred Oracle in language no less kind than satisfactory: *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.* And if this assurance should fail to restore tranquillity amidst his perturbed and distracted feelings, the indulgent God of all comfort has commissioned an apostle to inform him, *That all things work together for good to them that love God, and are called according to his purpose.* What then will be the duteous reply of his softened and acquiescent spirit? *Even so Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight: not my will, but thine be done.*

“It has pleased our Lord and Saviour thus to visit you. He has entered your delightful mansion and demanded a sacrifice at your hand, determining his own choice of the oblation he would deign to accept. But had he left it for your selection, what part of all your possessions would you have presented? The most valuable undoubtedly. I see you approaching the throne of Sovereign Mercy, leading between you the firstling of your flock—your lovely and accomplished Maria—and prostrating yourselves before the supreme Proprietor of heaven and earth, I hear you say,—

‘But if we might make this reserve,
And duty did not call:
We love our God with zeal so great,
That we could give him all.’

"Yes, you could: *the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak*, and while Grace triumphs, nature trembles. You have resigned her: nevertheless you have clothed yourselves in the habiliments of sorrow, and the sounds of joy and thanksgiving, which daily ascended from your domestic altar, are exchanged for the notes of mourning, lamentation, and woe. Yet suffer not the voice of inconsolable grief to reverberate *Ichabod* around the walls of your habitation; for while you may imagine the glory of your family departed, when your first-born was taken, the presence of the God of Israel remains with you, nor shall the covenant of his peace be removed from you.

"Grief, like a justly famed industrious insect, is ever engaged in the labour of extraction, till, wearied by its exertions, it returns to deposit its spoils in the destined cells. The productions of this useful creature are nutriment, and sweetness; but the passion to which it has been compared, usually retraces its flight to the lacerated bosom, surcharged with the essences of wormwood and of gall. It will alight upon a feature, it will settle upon an excellence, it will languish on a smile, it will agonize upon a farewell, it will contemplate its loss, till, unable to retain its accumulated anguish, it distils its virulent acquisitions into the overflowing heart of the unhappy sufferer, who convulsively exclaims, *All these things are against me. I will go down to the grave mourning.*

* "That you may be endowed with fortitude, and wisdom, and grace, to bear up above that state of despondency, into which too many are plunged under similar trials, is my fervent desire, and my daily prayer: but will not your own exertions be requisite? and must not the best energies of your minds be called into action, to repel the early touches of this baneful impression? Permit me also to remind you, that it will conduce to your tranquillity, to avoid the contemplation of every object and occurrence, connected with your late bereavement, that is calculated to produce an undesirable degree of excitement; for while this indulgence partially soothes the feelings, it certainly unnerves the frame, and leaves the heart an unshielded prey to its own sensibility.

"On a review, I am astonished to find that I have

been addressing you as if you had sustained a loss. How have I mistaken my point! Pass by my error; and may its discovery relieve your spirits. You have not lost your child; she has only preceded you to the mansions of glory. You have to endure only a temporary absence; and how short a period may be the remaining part of your life! Yet a little while, and you shall again behold your endeared Maria, and clasp her in an everlasting embrace. Your separation will then appear to have been only momentary; your reunion will be permanent as eternity.

"When you first received the dear departed from the hands of her Creator, he intrusted the invaluable treasure to your care, accompanied with the command, *Take this child, and nurse it for me.* You have been faithful to the precious charge. Formed in Nature's finest mould, her personal charms were attractive beyond many; but her intellectual superiority must have most powerfully captivated the hearts of her intelligent parents. Too much commendation cannot be awarded you, for your unwearied diligence in the cultivation of that noble understanding; and you have your reward: for while you were enriching her mind, not only with the communication of every species of useful knowledge, but with the incorruptible seed of the Kingdom, the Holy Spirit, by his renewing influences, was, imperceptibly to you, and even to herself, leading her to an acquaintance with her own heart—to a conviction of her need of a Saviour—and to a knowledge of Jesus Christ as her Redeemer, whom to know is eternal life. Thus early matured, and prepared to become an inheritor with the saints in light, she has bid farewell to her earthly instructors, and has taken her seat at the feet of her divine Master. How does the sweetness of his lips increase her knowledge, and the expressions of his approbation encourage her soul, while he is discovering to her delighted attention the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God. Thus employed and enraptured, can she bestow a thought on mortals? If so, doubtless that thought glances on you: and if any terrestrial consideration can enhance her bliss, it must be a consciousness that her beloved parents are pursuing *their pilgrimage* satisfied, and complete in all the will

of God. Has she not sanctioned this sentiment, by her willingness to remain a captive in the grasp of death, till she had witnessed the drops of paternal grief obliterated by the hand of resignation? Here she displayed magnanimity worthy a spirit just ready to wing its way to the throne of its conquering Lord. Oh! then, leave those who despise the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and who are contented to live without God in this perishable world, to sorrow over their departed friends, having no hope; while you, by a lively faith in the everlasting Gospel, are introduced to the general assembly of the church of the first-born, who are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant,—even to him who has visited you with this dispensation, and promised, that after you have suffered and done the will of his heavenly Father, he will come again, and receive you to himself, that where he is, and where your beloved Maria is, you may be also.

“We have been anticipating the pleasure of seeing our mutual friend, Mrs. Loader, at the Elms, but cannot desire the indulgence at present, as it would be the means of depriving you of her interesting society, unless our combined solicitations can prevail with you to accompany her hither. If we succeed in gaining this point, it will indeed be an important addition to our gratification: and may we not hope that the change of air and scene will be beneficial to you, and conduce to the alleviation of your minds, and even recruit your fatigued spirits? Think of it, I intreat you, decide, and come.

“Our family unite in sympathy and esteem with

“Your affectionate

“LOUISA.”

When the destroying angel visited the land of Egypt, to sacrifice the first-born of every family, he forbore to enter the habitations of the righteous: but now neither the moans of sorrow, nor the fervour of devotion, can arrest his progress; and he bears away with as much complacency the child of tender years, as the venerable sire, who is sinking under the weight of his infirmities.

The anguish which this usually inflicts on the parental bosom, exceeds the force of language to describe ; and though the consolations of religion may afford some degree of support, yet time alone can effectually heal the wound. To retrace on the faithful tablet of the heart the features of the departed child, to recal to our remembrance, the early incidents of his life—to handle the toys which amused him in his infantile days, or the books from which he drew his stores of knowledge in riper years, may afford a high degree of melancholy pleasure during the season of sorrow and of grief; but it is no less the duty, than the privilege of the Christian parent to turn his attention to the moral design which God has in view, by sending such a severe dispensation, and thus endeavour to derive personal good from his relative loss. To imagine, even for a moment, that such an affliction is a positive evil, would be a direct impeachment of the divine testimony, which assures us, *that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.*

In the loss which you are now deploring, can you not trace marks of affection? By removing your child, he has rescued him from the various evils to which we are all exposed, and suddenly prepared him for that unchanging bliss which is withheld from others, till they are made perfect by sufferings. Unwilling that the object of his choice should suffer the diseases of infancy—the weariness attendant on a progressive course of mental improvement—the internal conflict which is perpetuated between the flesh and the spirit—the sorrow of the world which worketh death—or the infirmities of old age, he has shortened the ordinary term of mortal existence, and received him into his own immediate presence. There the song of Moses and the Lamb is sung in strains unknown to us, and the scenery around him excites an order of enraptured feeling peculiar to the heavenly world. Do you wish those gates, through which he has passed to the realms of immortality, to be re-opened for his expulsion? Can you charge the Redeemer with unkindness, for placing the victor's crown on his head at such an early period of his being? Impossible! *Arise and imitate the example of the King of Israel,*

who after his child was dead, "arose from the earth, and washed and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? Thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore shall I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

This bereavement may be designed to prevent keener anguish at a future period. If an early grave had been opened for Nadab and Abihu, their venerable father might have wept over their premature death, but the prospect of seeing them minister before the Lord in the *heavenly temple*, would have reconciled him to the affliction. But this privilege was denied him. For offering strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not, *there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them; and they died before the Lord.* With what emotions did he gather up their ashes, or anticipate the day of final retribution. Unhappy father, doomed to witness thy two sons cut off from the land of the living by the judgments of heaven!! What is the loss of children in infancy, and falling by the stroke of nature, compared to this?

If that lovely girl who now lies silent in the tomb, had been spared, she might have become the innocent occasion of future trouble. Formed for society, she might have been left a widow in early life; or involved in complicated misery, by the rashness or inadvertency of her domestic companion, like Naomi, she might have traced back her steps to the place of her nativity, poor and unpitied.

That youth, who bid fair to perpetuate your name to remote generations, if preserved, might have brought your grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. After having received his portion of goods, like the Prodigal, he might have left your abode, and spent his substance in riotous

living. He might have been driven into exile, and compelled to drag out a miserable existence, where the voice of freedom is never heard. Your imagination may place him in a more perilous situation: In the field of blood he might have received a mortal wound—left amidst the trampling of the horses, and the roaring of the cannon, to expire alone! There, no maternal hand is present to wipe off the cold sweats of death, no endeared sister is near to perform the last office of kindness to a dying brother! No Minister of mercy dares approach, to cheer him with the consolation of the gospel!

“ Yet you mourn the blighted bloom ;
Weep its premature decay ;
Think it sad to fade so soon,
Smile and languish in a day.

If you could their future know,
Learn their dangers or alloy ;
Then might streams of murmuring woe
Rise to springs of grateful joy.

They are tenderly reserved,
Shelter'd in some friendly tomb,
By indulgent Heav'n preserved,
To escape severer doom.”

The pernicious influence of prosperity is universally admitted. It obscures those prospects which are afar off, chills the ardour of devotion, secularizes the general frame of the mind, produces a disinclination to self-inspection; and though it cannot destroy the principle of grace, yet it materially weakens its energy and checks its growth. The moral apathy which usually accompanies it, renders the most pointed and touching appeals of the pulpit nugatory. Even if an extraordinary force be employed to rouse the dormant attention of the mind to its spiritual interests, and produce alarm and dejection, yet from the press of business and the crowd of visitors, it soon falls back to its former state of indifference. *My people are bent to backsliding from me. How shall they be recovered? He visits their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes.*

The scene of his providence is reversed, that the “pleasant things” which are laid waste may again flourish. The evils occasioned by prosperity must be destroyed

by adversity. The sacred enjoyments which have been lost amidst the din of worldly pursuits must be recovered in the house of mourning. Retrace your religious history. Recal to your remembrance the day of your espousal to Christ, the serenity and the enraptured feeling which you then enjoyed, the indifference with which you looked on the allurements of the world, the zeal which you displayed, the solemnity and delight with which you celebrated the death of Jesus. Of joys that are past, how pleasing the remembrance; but if they can never be recalled, how painful. Are yours fled for ever, and after having tasted that the Lord is gracious, must you abandon yourself to despair? No. A mysterious providence has now disturbed your spiritual slumber, and commanded you to prepare for the Bridegroom's voice. With tears of sorrow which you are shedding over your beloved child, mingle those of gratitude, that mercy is rejoicing over judgment.

Your backslidings may reprove you, but they should not discourage you. The kind Intercessor, "who loves, and pleads, and prays," has compassion, not only on the ignorant, but on those who are out of the way. He will restore unto you the joy of his salvation; and though your harp of praise may not immediately sound so sweet, so loud, as in former times; yet

"'Tis strung and tun'd for endless years."

In future life you will review the melancholy incidents of your present calamity, and say, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted. Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept thy word.*

This bereavement may be intended to exalt your character by calling into exercise your religious principles. *No affliction for the present is joyous but grievous.* It mortifies pride, disappoints the expectations which have been formed, deranges the harmony of preconceived plans, and pierces the heart with many sorrows. In the calamities with which we are usually exercised, there is so much blame justly attached to the imprudence, the treachery, and the injustice of others, that we are not always aware of the impropriety of the anger or the resentment which we feel. It is only by a progressive mode of reasoning that we are led to recognize

an invisible agency, directing the operation of these means, to remind us that this is not our rest. But in the loss of children the finger of God is visible.

In reference to such an event, the language of David should be uttered,—*I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.* You may weep over the lifeless body without offering violence to your Christian principles, but to indulge a dissatisfied spirit is dishonourable to the divine character, and will prove injurious to your own peace. It virtually impeaches the wisdom and equity of his conduct, and, by inflaming the passions, it will incapacitate you for receiving the consolations of religion. It will be useless; for “tears will not water the lovely plant, so as to cause it to grow again—sighs will not give it new birth—nor can you furnish it with life and spirits by the waste of your own.” When Aaron lost his two sons, he held his peace. Job said, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.* Who has bereaved you of your child? The Lord hath done it. For what purpose? To present it faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. When you deposited the precious remains in the silent tomb, did you extinguish the hope of another interview? *I would not have you to be ignorant, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

The Author acknowledges with gratitude the following sums, received on behalf of the Widow, alluded to in No. 30, of this Series.

Mrs. Heron, of Manchester.....	1	0	0
Messrs. Whittakers.....	1	0	0
Eliza.....	2	0	0

[No. 72.

THE
EVANGELICAL RAMBLER.

ON AMUSEMENTS.

PART II.



“How this damsel could so far subdue the common feelings of human nature, and still more the natural tenderness of her own sex, as not only to endure so disgusting a spectacle, but even to carry the bleeding trophy in triumph to her mother, is not easy to imagine; but it shews, that a life of fashionable gaiety and dissipation not only prevents the growth of the more amiable virtues, but sometimes calls into action those feelings and passions which lead to rapine and murder.” Page 12.

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1824.

ON AMUSEMENTS.

PART II.

"Thus life rolls away, with too many, in a course of 'shapeless indolence.' Its recreations constitute its chief business. Watering places—the sports of the field—cards! never-failing cards!—the assembly—the theatre,—all contribute their aid,—amusements are multiplied, and combined, and varied, 'to fill up the void of a listless and languid life;' and by the judicious use of these different resources, there is often a kind of sober, settled plan of domestic dissipation, in which, with all imaginable decency, year after year wears away in unprofitable vacancy."

Wilberforce.

"INDEED," said *Miss Emma*, "I think we have been kept too much out of the world: and though I certainly respect the motive which has induced our parents to act as they have done, yet I may express my disapprobation of it. We are like so many state-prisoners, who have every indulgence except unfettered liberty, which I regard as

'Heaven's best gift to man,'"

Miss Orme. "I have no doubt, my dear, but your parents act conscientiously in prohibiting the novel, and the cards; but you must know that religious people in general do so: though I have known some who have made a very splendid profession, who have not objected to play a game at whist after family prayer in the evening."

"Yes, and so have I. I was on a visit at Mr. R——'s some few months since, when the bagatelle-table and backgammon-board were brought out for our amusement; and I don't know when I have spent a more pleasant evening."

"And who is Mr. R——, my dear? Is he a pious man? or does he belong to the world?"

"He professes to be a pious man; and I should suppose he is one, for he has prayer in his family morning and evening."

"Had he family prayer, the evening you refer to, before or after these innocent games were introduced?"

"Oh, it was omitted that evening."

Miss Holmes. "And why, my dear, was it omitted? Was it not because he was ashamed to place the Bible

on the same table with the baggatelle and gammon-board?—and because, after *enticing* others to a conformity to the customs of the world, he could not, in their presence, go and pray, that they might be *renewed in the spirit of their mind*? Do you recollect the remarks which you made on your return home?”

“They have escaped my recollection.”

Miss Holmes. “After paying a compliment to his politeness, and extreme courteousness, you observed, that he only wanted one quality to finish his character.”

“And did I say what that quality was?”

Miss Holmes. “Yes; you said, and said very justly, it was *consistency*.”

“Oh! I recollect, that was the opinion I *THEN* entertained.”

Miss Holmes. “And have you changed your opinion? Do you not think that religious people ought to abstain from the *appearance of evil*, instead of conforming to its customs?”

“Yes, most certainly. I remember a young satirical friend came and whispered in my ear, just as we began a fresh game,—‘Make haste, as Mr. R—— has just rung the bell for family prayer.’ This remark was heard by all our party; and I must confess that I was hurt by some of the observations which were made.”

Miss Orme. “I don’t know *why* the most religious people may not indulge themselves in all these amusements; but certainly our prejudices receive a violent shock when we know that they do.”

Miss Emma. “I love consistency. If a family have prayer, they ought not, in my opinion, to spend the evenings in games which certainly have not a *religious* tendency; and if they have these games, they had better leave off prayer, as they cannot be prepared for it. I *knew* a young friend, the daughter of pious parents, who once had her mind very deeply impressed by a sense of the vanity of the world, and the importance of religion; but in consequence of paying a visit to the house of a very flaming professor, who in the temple was grave, and in the parlour gay—who alternately played and prayed—sang songs or psalms, as fancy dictated,—lost all her pious impressions, and from that time she became averse to religion; nor can she conquer her aversion.”

Miss Holmes. "Example has a powerful influence, especially in doing moral injury: but the most pernicious and dangerous, is the example of a professor who acts in opposition to the obligations of his profession—of the man, who, while he professes to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, displays a spirit that is unconsistant with the sacredness of that character—and retains his religious habits, even while he conforms himself to the customs of the world."

Miss Orme. "Well, my dear, no one will impeach your consistency; for you are, without exception, one of the most decidedly religious I ever knew."

Miss Emma. "Yes; my sister goes rather too far; and I tell her sometimes, that she is in danger of becoming a Pharisee. She sees, or thinks she sees, a dangerous moral tendency in almost every amusement: and such is the influence she possesses over the fears of our parents, that they are kept in a state of constant terror, lest I should read a novel, or dance a minuet."

"And is it possible, my dear Miss Holmes, that either you, or your parents can object to dancing? An exercise so conducive to health—so calculated to give elegance to the form, to the walk, and to the action—an accomplishment of so much importance, that no female can be fit to move in genteel society who has not attained it. I believe you learnt at school, my dear Emma; did you not?"

"Yes; but now I am not permitted to go into a party, which I consider very mortifying. My parents gave their consent for me to learn; and now I have learnt, and am fond of the amusement, they will not suffer me to practise."

Miss Holmes. "They permitted you to learn, that you might derive from it those personal accomplishments which your friend Miss Orme has so well described; but as they are aware of its dangerous moral tendency, they very properly object to your going into parties."

"Then, ought they not to have refused letting me learn to dance, if they intended to deny me the pleasure of it?*" This is like a father teaching his son the art

* The author knows a lady, who, when young, requested her pious father to permit her to learn to dance. "No, my child,"

of engraving,¹ and then taking away his tools lest he should be hung for coining."

Miss Holmes. "You may dance for the purposes for which you were permitted to learn; but I appeal to your good sense, if it be not an act of kindness on the part of your parents, in withholding their consent from your visiting the ball-room, when they apprehend you will sustain some moral injury."

Miss Orme. "But you know, Miss Holmes, that the chief gratification which we derive from any attainment or accomplishment, is the opportunity of displaying it. What pleasure would there be in learning to paint, unless we had the liberty of exhibiting our drawings?—or who would submit to the labour of learning the notes of the gamut, if, after she has succeeded, she is to be prohibited from playing?"

Miss Holmes. "But are you not aware, that the love of display is one of those passions which ought to be suppressed rather than cherished, especially in a female? Are we not often censured by the other sex for our vanity? and shall we continue to sanction the correctness of such charges by fostering the passion? I admit, that we ought to attain those accomplishments which the present improved state of society demands;

he replied, "I cannot consent to comply with a request which may subject me to your censures at some future period." "No, father, I will never censure you for complying with my request." "Nor can I consent to give you an opportunity. If you learn, I have no doubt but you will excel; and when you leave school, you may then want to go into company to exhibit your skill. If I then object to let you, as I most likely should, you would very naturally reply,—Why, father, did you permit me to learn, if I am not permitted to practise?" This reply convinced her that her father acted wisely, though he opposed her inclination: and though she did learn, yet, not having his consent, she never presumed to expose herself to the dangers of the assembly-room; as she well knew, that she could not do it without inflicting a wound on that paternal breast which glowed with the most pure and tender affection for her. She is now become a parent—has often mentioned this occurrence as having had a powerful moral influence over her mind in the days of her juvenile vanity—and has incorporated this maxim in her system of domestic economy,—Never to comply with a request which may subject her to any future reflections from her children.

but to attain them for the mere sake of display, is no less destructive of our influence over the other sex, than injurious to the moral tone of our mind."

Miss Orme. "I am sure the gentlemen admire a lady who can sing well—and play well—and dance well—and move with grace as she enters, or leaves a room."

Miss Holmes. "Yes, my dear; but if she have no higher accomplishments, though she may be admired, she will not be respected—she may have her name mentioned with éclat in the circles of fashion, but she will not be held in esteem among the wise and the good—and she may do as a companion for the evening dance, but no man of sense will think of her as a companion for life."

Miss Orme. "But do you wish the assembly-rooms deserted? If so, I fear you will never have your wishes realized. But to come to the point,—What are the evils which you think result from such scenes of amusement?"

Miss Holmes. "I do not expect to see such places deserted, as there are too many temptations presented to each sex within the assembly-room to make them unpopular in this age of degeneracy; but they are productive of so many evils, that I consider them essentially injurious to the morals of society. There is the expence which they incur, and the long train of evils which often follow. What costly dresses! what a profusion of useless ornaments must be purchased! beside the incidental items of expence, in going, and returning, and paying for the admission ticket. If the whole expence of one evening's gratification were accurately calculated, it would astonish us. And what is the consequence of this? The bills of tradesmen are often left undischarged—the claims of benevolence are rejected—and a habit of useless extravagance is formed, which extends its destructive influence to other branches of domestic expenditure. But I have a still more serious objection to urge against such scenes of amusement;—the perilous risk which a female often runs. She goes, clad in a light attire—moves about in a warm room—and then suddenly exposes herself, without any adequate increase

of cloathing, to a cold and damp atmosphere; by which she often sacrifices her health, and sometimes her life.*

Miss Orme. "But you know that this objection will apply with equal force against our attending a crowded place of worship."

Miss Holmes. "Not with equal force, my dear; because in a place of worship we remain *still* during the time of service, and usually go in *warmer*, not to say *more decent attire*."

"The moral influence which such public amusements have over the mind, is another very powerful objection against them. By your permission I will read a paragraph from a good writer, who expresses himself in very correct and forcible language.

"The objects which, during the season of youth, most easily excite vanity and envy in the female breast, are those which are presented in the ball-room. This is deemed the stage for displaying the attractions by the possession of which a young woman is apt to be most elated; and they are here displayed under circumstances most calculated to call forth the triumph and the animosities of personal competition. This triumph, and these animosities betray themselves occasionally to the least discerning eye. But were the recesses of the heart laid open, how often would the sight of a stranger, of an acquaintance, even of a friend, superior for the evening in the attractions of dress, or enjoying the supposed advantage of having secured a wealthier, a more lively, a more graceful, or a more fashionable partner, be found to excite feelings of disgust, and of aversion, not always stopping short of malevolence! How often would the passions be seen inflamed, and every nerve agitated, by a thirst for precedence! and invention be observed, labouring to mortify a rival by the affectation of indifference or of contempt!"

Miss Orme. "But do you not think it possible for a female to attend a ball without having her breast inflated with vanity, or surcharged with envy?"

Miss Holmes. "I certainly admit that it is possible,

* The author refers the attention of his readers to No. 42 of this series, which records one of the several instances which have fallen under his notice within the last few years, and which have been owing to the cause which is here stated.

but not probable. If she excel others in the richness or the elegance of her dress, or if she receive any peculiar marks of attention from the leading fashionables of the scene, will she not feel the flush of vain glory?—And if others excel her, or receive higher honours, will she not retire from the company stung with envy?—And can either of these passions be excited without producing some demoralizing effect? If she become vain of the ornaments which decorate her person, she will be under a strong temptation to neglect the improvement of her mind; and while this passion enslaves and governs her, the more amiable and lovely tempers will be neglected.—And if she become envious of the superior attainments or honours of others, she will be restless—mortified—consume her time, and expend her money, in making useless efforts to equal or surpass them, and may be induced to invent or to circulate tales of calumny to their injury.”

Miss Orme. “But you do not mean to say that these effects are invariably produced?”

Miss Holmes. “Not invariably; because there are some females who visit these places as a passing compliment to the fashion of the age, who look down with comparative contempt on such exhibitions of human folly. They attend as spectators* of the scene, rather than as actors—to oblige a friend, rather than gratify themselves; and when the curtain drops, having answered the design of their visit, they retire uninjured, because they felt no desire to be seen or heard—alike indifferent to the charm of superior or inferior appearances.”

Miss Orme. “You have stated the evils which you think generally result from such public amusements, but you have made no allusion to the advantages which attend them; amongst which I reckon, the introduction

* The author has known some professors of evangelical religion who have occasionally frequented these scenes of amusement; and though he would not condemn them as insincere in their religious profession, yet he cannot conceive how they can approve of their own conduct. If they go occasionally, others feel at liberty to go habitually: and though they may go, and retire without sustaining any material injury to their principles, yet they know not how much injury their example may do to others, and especially their own children.

which they give to the best of society. You know that we are confined within the precincts of home—our duties and pursuits are of the more retired order; and though we may take our evening walks, and occasionally go to Margate, or Cheltenham, or some other fashionable resort, yet, if it were not for these public amusements, we should have no opportunity of being introduced to the company of the other sex. Here we are brought together; and you know, my dear, that the most important consequences often follow.”

Miss Holmes. “Very true; but these important consequences are not always the most interesting. The writer to whom I have previously referred has made some good remarks on this subject, which, by your permission, I will read to you.

“An evil of great moment, which is too frequently known to occur at the places of amusement now under notice, is, the introduction of women to undesirable and improper acquaintance among the other sex; undesirable and improper, as I would now be understood to mean, in a moral point of view. Men of this description commonly abound at all scenes of public resort and entertainment; and are not seldom distinguished by fortune and birth—gay and conciliating manners—and every qualification which is needful to procure a favourable reception in polite company. Hence, when they propose themselves as partners in an assembly-room, a lady does not always find it easy, according to the rules of decorum, to decline the offer; and is sometimes enticed, by their external appearance, and by having seen other ladies ambitious of dancing with them, into a reprehensible inclination not to decline it.

“Women, in various occurrences of life, are betrayed, by a dread of appearing ungenteelly bashful, and by a desire of rendering themselves agreeable, into an indiscreet freedom of manners and conversation with men of whom they know perhaps but little; and still more frequently, into a greater degree of freedom with those of whom they have more knowledge, than can fitly be indulged, except towards persons with whom they are connected by particular ties. The temptation is in no place more powerful than in a ball-room. Let not indiscriminate familiarity be shewn towards all partners, nor

injudicious familiarity towards any. To reject every boisterous and unbecoming mode of dancing, and to observe, in every point, the strictest modesty in attire, are cautions on which, in addressing women of delicacy, it is surely needless to insist.*

Miss Orme. "Well, I assure you, my dear Miss Holmes, I think both you, and the gentleman whose sentiments you have just quoted, overrate the dangers which we are exposed to by attending such scenes of amusement; for I have never known one friend injured by them, nor have I ever heard of such a thing."

Miss Holmes. "You forget Miss M——."*

Miss Orme. "I beg pardon. I do. Ah! that was a tragical event."

Miss Holmes. "And how many tragical events have risen out of these scenes of amusement! You have read, I have no doubt, the following account of one which befel a very holy man. *When Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before*

* Miss M—— was a young lady of rare accomplishments—the only child of a pious and affectionate mother. When she left school she enlarged the circle of her acquaintance—began to dress in the highest style of fashion—and after many intreaties, she obtained the consent of her Mamma to go *once* to the assembly-room, just to see the parties. She was dressed most elegantly; and having a graceful form, and a fine open countenance, glowing with health, she excited considerable attention, which was no less gratifying than it was unexpected. One gentleman, who had been very polite during the evening, and who was her superior in rank, solicited the honour of conducting her home, which was granted. Having ascertained the usual time and place of her evening walk, he met her—made her an offer, which she accepted; when, having secured her affections, he accomplished her ruin, and left her. This broke her mother's heart, and eventually broke her own; and the parent and the daughter were buried in the same grave at the distance of about six months from each other's funeral, both deploring, when too late, the danger resulting from the assembly-room. Nor is this an uncommon instance. At these places the spirits of evil resort,—availing themselves of the freedom of intercourse which is tolerated;—and having marked their victim, they proceed, with all the cunning and duplicity of the *author of all evil*, to accomplish their destructive purpose: and if parents wish to preserve the honour of their children uncontaminated, or females who are grown to years of discretion wish to avoid the snares in which others have been taken, they ought to shun the resorts of the licentious and impure; for in *this age of degeneracy* no one can be safe in their society.

them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. And the king was sorry: nevertheless, for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. How this damsel could so far subdue the common feelings of human nature, and still more the natural tenderness of her own sex, as not only to endure so disgusting a spectacle, but even to carry the bleeding trophy in triumph to her mother, is not easy to imagine; but it shews, that a life of fashionable gaiety and dissipation not only prevents the growth of the more amiable and useful virtues, but sometimes calls into action those feelings and passions which lead to rapine and murder."

The late excellent Bishop Horne closes his life of St. John in such a forcible and beautiful manner, that the author does not conceive it necessary to offer any apology to his readers for its insertion on the present occasion.

"The Baptist's fate being determined, *immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went, and beheaded him in the prison.* This deed of darkness must have been done in the season proper for it,—the middle of the night; and St. John was probably awakened, to receive his sentence, out of that sleep which truth and innocence can secure to their possessor in any situation. The generality of mankind have reason enough to deprecate a sudden death, lest it should surprize them in one of their many unguarded hours. But to St. John no hour could be such. He had finished the work which God had given him to do. He had kept the faith, and preserved a conscience void of offence. He had done his duty, and waited daily and hourly, we may be sure, for his departure. He was now, therefore, called off from his station with honour, to quit the well-fought field for the palace of the Great King—to refresh himself, after the dust, and toil, and heat of the day, by bathing in the fountain of life and

immortality—to exchange his blood-stained armour for a robe of glory—and to have his temporary labours rewarded with eternal rest—to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God—and as the friend of the Bridegroom, to enter into the joy of his Lord. From the darkness and confinement of a prison, he passed to the liberty and light of heaven; and while malice was gratified with a sight of his head, and his body was carried by a few friends in silence to the grave, his immortal spirit repaired to a court, where no Herod desires to have his brother's wife—where no Herodias thirsts after the blood of a prophet—where he who hath laboured with sincerity and diligence in the work of reformation is sure to be well received—where holiness, zeal, and constancy are crowned, and receive palms from the Son of God, whom they confessed in the world.

' So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon uprears his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new spangled ore,
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky—
He hears the unexpressive nuptial song
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies;
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.' " MILTON.

* * *The Author of the Rambler takes this opportunity of expressing his gratitude to his numerous readers for the very favourable reception which they have given to his labours, and to say, that he shall comprise the whole of this Series in one more Volume.*







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